

PHILIP'S LIFE WORK.

A TEMPERANCE TALE.

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RELIGIOUS
GIFT-SERIES

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CHAPTER I.

Had anyone prophesied, when I was seventeen, that before another birthday has passed over my head, I should be an orphan, dependent on my own unaided efforts for a livelihood, I should have utterly repudiated the idea that such a thing could happen.

Such sudden and dreadful calamities did occur sometimes, I should have admitted, might occur in the case of someone with whom I was acquainted, but not to me : certainly not to me, the cherished idol of a father and mother, whose only child I was, whose love was the greatest blessing of my existence, and whose death, I should then have considered, the greatest misfortune that could possibly befall me.

It is ever thus we reason and expect. Trouble may come to our town, our street, our next door neighbor, but not to us : no not to us. Mentally we clothe ourselves with shield and buckler, which shall ward off its approach. But what avails it? The stroke falls nevertheless, and it is quite as well sometimes, that we had so little knowledge of its vicinity.

My father, a hard-worked and poorly paid dissenting minister, had never been of a strong constitution, and that consti-

tution, such as it was, having for years been taxed to the utmost, both by bodily fatigue and mental exertion, sudden prostration was the result, and death ere long the final consequence of tampering with nature.

My mother, notwithstanding her doting love for myself, never recovered the shock of my father's death, and in three months I had again to see my best-beloved carried from my sight forever, to the resting place from which there is no return; and to feel, that now I was indeed alone, in a world which had little attraction for one situated as I was, and no compensation to offer for such a loss as I had sustained.

For a week after my mother's burial, I sat in a stupor, from which I thought nothing again could ever rouse me; and though both neighbors, and those who had been members of my father's congregation, showed me no little kindness in this my time of bodily and mental prostration, I was utterly indifferent to their affectionate efforts, to divert me from my sorrow, and would as soon they had left me to my despair, nor troubled me with a sympathy which brought no healing with it.

But this could not go on for ever. I was not only an orphan, but a penniless one; albeit for the first week of my bereavement the first fact alone occupied my thoughts. Of the latter I never thought for a moment, until the lawyer who had charge of my father's affairs brought it to my remembrance with lawyer-like decision and abruptness.

Ushered into the room one day, where I was sitting as usual in sad and solitary musing, by the lady, who had since my mother's death, constituted herself, or been constituted by him, my companion and guardian, he had scarcely shaken hands and seated himself, when he began :

"Well, my dear, what are you going to do?"

"What do you mean?" I inquired, not having the least idea what the query had reference to.

"Mean!" he exclaimed, a little irritated I thought, "why I mean, of course, what are you going to do for a livelihood?"

"I don't know," I returned, absently.

"Well, my dear, excuse me, but you would require to give the subject some consideration."

"Have I nothing?" I exclaimed, beginning dimly to comprehend my situation, recalling also how often my mother had deplored her sickness and inability to exert herself for our maintenance, and her distress at the thought that we were unavoidably contracting debt it might never be in our power to pay.

"Nothing whatever, except the furniture of the house," he replied, pointing to the well-worn but much loved articles which filled the room; "that will bring about fifty pounds, thirty of that has to go to pay your debts, and you can't live on the interest of twenty pounds."

"What would you advise me to do?" I asked, too indifferent to think for myself, and too much accustomed to depend on others, to decide on any course not at first suggested to me.

"Well, what can you do?" asked the lawyer briskly.

"How do you mean?"

"What can you do to earn an honest penny?"

"Oh! nothing," I returned, dreamily.

"Nothing! my dear, you must do something; come now, like a good girl, rouse yourself, and consider the matter; my time is too precious to waste idling here. Can you play, or draw, or anything like that?"

"Oh ! no, I did get music and drawing lessons at school, but I can't play or draw anything to speak of."

"Can you sing, then, or do fancy work?"

"No !"

"What can you do ? can you read and spell?"

"Yes."

"Nursery governess," muttered the lawyer aside, as if he were labelling me for sale. "What folly ! daughter of a poor minister, and no accomplishments to fall back on !"

"Well, my dear, I will see what I can do for you, and will let you know when anything turns up. You had better keep Mrs. Simmond's with you for company, and I will call again in a day or two ;" and without further parley the lawyer took his departure, and I was left with a dreamy notion, that I was by some means to be transformed into a nursery governess, and the lawyer was to be the means of bringing it about. I did not then know that this fussy little man had no call or inducement to interest himself in my affairs, other than the respect he bore my father's memory, and the promise given to him on his death-bed ; but even had I been aware that in my own case money requital was with him "no object," I believe I was too stunned, and too much absorbed with the aching sense of loss which filled my heart, to think about it, or feel grateful for his undeserved efforts on my behalf.

I do not know how long I had sat alone after his withdrawal, when Mrs. Simmond's, my present companion, and wife of a deacon in my father's church, entered the room, exclaiming, "Oh ! Miss Eleanor, you have let the fire go out !" "Poor dear," she continued, more tenderly, "how cold you are. Come to the kitchen fire, till I kindle this one, and then we

will get a cup of tea. I am so sorry I went napping and left you so long alone."

Too indifferent to be disobedient, I languidly obeyed,—but before the cup of tea could be prepared, the heat of the kitchen fire had done its work, and I was soon fast asleep; and in the morning, the only thing I remembered of the previous evening, was the kind voice of Mrs. Simmond's, as she coaxed me to retire, and herself undid the fastenings of my clothes, as she assisted me to bed.

Another week had scarcely passed, when I received a communication from the lawyer, in which he informed me that something had "turned up;" a most fortunate chance, as he termed it, viz., a nursery-governesship in the family of James Maxwell, of Maxwell Grange, in the neighboring town of W—— and I was to enter on my duties two weeks later.

I knew some of the family of James Maxwell quite well by sight, and was also acquainted, by hearsay, with some of its antecedents, viz., that the owner of Maxwell Grange, or Maxwell as they liked to have it called, had retired from business twenty years before, and had, within the last ten years, married his second wife, who had brought him three children in addition to the two daughters by his first marriage.

I had often, girl like, admired the pretty toilets of the young ladies, as the carriage drove through our village, and wished that my father could afford me such handsome dresses, and tasteful bonnets, as those which were worn by the fair sisters.

The children, I was not acquainted with, by sight or otherwise, but when the lawyer himself, in a personal visit, corroborated the intelligence that Maxwell was to be my destination, he also informed me that the younger family consisted of two

boys and a girl, who were to be my pupils ; and for whose instruction I was to receive the sum of fifteen pounds annually.

Already, I was beginning to feel some degree of interest in my future duties, and was thankful, that if I had to go out and earn my own living, it was not to be the means of taking me further from the place, which had been my home, and which was hallowed by so many sacred memories ; and that it was to take me into a family, in whom I had felt considerable curiosity, before I had the least idea that I should so soon be brought into such intimate relations thereto.

The furniture was immediately advertised to be disposed of on a certain day, and the remainder of the money it brought, after the debts were paid, to go to the improvement of my wardrobe, which was scarcely in a suitable condition for entering on my situation.

In the meantime, I was to go home with Mrs. Simmond's, as, after the sale, the house was to be ticketed, "To let."

So ended the quiet and happy and contented childhood, which had been blessed by a father's and mother's love ; and so began the life of dependence and solitude, which mostly, if not always, is the orphan's portion.

CHAPTER II.

I had been three days installed as mistress of the shabby room, which did duty as school-room for the Maxwell children ; but though I had been able to maintain tolerable cheerfulness since I had assumed the above position, I had as yet felt little interest in my pupils, or in the duties which pertained thereto.

On the fourth morning, I rose with a sense of depression, which, struggle as I would, I could not overcome. The comparative cheerfulness of the previous days had all forsaken me, and the duties I had looked on yesterday, as helps to restore the interest I had lost in men and things, I felt to-day to be a weary drudgery, from which I could see no way of escape, through endless years of loneliness and self-denial. I knew nothing of teaching, and therefore could not love it for its own sake ; and as I knew quite as little of children, never having been brought into intimate contact with them, I almost dreaded the little beings, who were confided to my care, and feared I should never be able to exercise the control over them, which alone could make my position bearable.

When I entered the school-room, and took up the work with which I occupied the first half-hour, while the children had an opportunity of recalling their simple lessons prepared the previous evening, I could not keep back the tears which rose to my eyes, as the sad and bitter thoughts which haunted me, returned again and again, to rob me of the composure I was striving to regain, before summoning the children to their tasks.

Ignorant as I was of child-nature, I supposed of course, that the children were as deeply absorbed with their lessons as I was with my own affairs, and was therefore considerably startled by the following conversation, conducted among them in a stage whisper, which, my seat being at some distance, I was evidently not supposed or intended to overhear.

"I say, Harry, ain't she a molly coddle? My! if she ain't crying," whispered the second boy to his elder brother. "A queer governess she is."

"Hush, Arthur, she'll hear if you don't look out," replied Harry, keeping his eyes fixed on his book.

"You are not kind, Artie; you know quite well she has lost her ma, so no wonder she cries," put in five year old Daisy, in pathetic tones.

"My, that's nothing. Didn't Sylvia and Meta lose their mamma, too, and papa got them a new one? I know, for Jane told me all about it."

"Oh, yes, but she has no papa either, so how can he?"

"How do you know?"

"That lawyer-man told my pa, when he was here one day. He said Miss Maitland was an orphint, and I asked Jane what an orphint was, and she said it was a little girl that had no father and no mother; so there now!"

"Well, anyway, if she's such a cry-baby, she'll never be able to manage us," and the young gentleman drew himself up, as if he felt himself a match for half-a-dozen governesses such as his present one.

The little urchin never knew how much good his saucy words did me. They showed me that to rule these children well, I must first, be able to rule my own spirit, and in some

degree overcome the grief which was tugging at my heart-strings, and rendering me unfit for the battle of life, which lay before me ; and from which I could not withdraw, even if I would.

I had no thought yet of gaining the hearts of my young charge, and thus ruling them by the highest law of all, the law of love ; but my pride was aroused, and I resolved that they should at least obey me.

Choking back the sobs which were hard to suppress, and resolutely swallowing the lump which had been in my throat all the morning, I told the children, in more decided tones than I had yet made use of, to come and recite their lessons.

I saw, or imagined, a look of surprise on their faces, as they obeyed the command, but though I did not forget the preceding conversation, I do not suppose any of them imagined I had been a listener to the little talk, which was probably forgotten by them, almost as soon as over.

The forenoon tasks were nearly finished, when a knock came to the door, and was followed by the entrance of Miss Maxwell, of whom hitherto I had seen very little, except at meal times, as she had not before favored the school-room with a visit. Rising timidly, but politely, I hastened to offer her a chair, but she merely bowed, as if in acknowledgment, saying, "I only want a book, Miss Maitland," and getting what she had come for, immediately retired.

I was somewhat awed by the elder Miss Maxwell ; the youngest I had not yet seen. In the first place, she was so lovely, and dressed so handsomely ; and in the second, maintained such a haughty demeanor towards me when we did come in contact, I could not but feel myself at an immeasurable

distance from such a superior being, and was conscious of a species of self-contempt when in her presence, which was by no means a pleasant emotion. Annoyed now at the blush, which had risen to my face on her entrance, and fearing the children might perceive it, in some confusion I resumed my seat ; but apparently they were more engrossed with their sister, than my humble self.

"My ! ain't she a beauty, Miss Maitland?" ejaculated Arthur, as the door closed behind her. "She's on her new dress, too ; I can guess whose coming."

"Is it her beau?" asked Daisy, mysteriously.

"Your sister is very lovely," I said, replying to Arthur's question, "but why do you use 'my' so often, Arthur? It was not required just now ; and then 'ain't,' that is bad grammar ; you must say, 'isn't she,' and not, 'ain't she.'"

"O! bother, *I* can't help it. Miss Claxton never could cure me of it, and she tried hard."

"Well, *I* intend to cure you of it, and will give you an extra task every time you use either expression in my presence."

The merry blue eyes were lifted to mine in astonishment ; but Arthur was mute. I believe he dreaded opening his lips, lest he should earn a task by making use of one of the prohibited syllables.

He indemnified himself afterwards, however, for I heard him during the play which intervened between forenoon and afternoon lessons exclaiming to his brother, "My ! Harry, I believe she is going to manage us after all." "I believe you," was the laconic reply. But it let me know that my pupils were beginning to suspect I might possibly be made of sterner stuff than they had at first imagined, a discovery I myself was also mak-

ing. Hitherto my own will had been in such complete and willing subjection to that of my father and mother, who had sought to gratify me in every possible way, in which the dictates of their loving hearts, and slender means, could be made to harmonize, I had never required to exercise the primness, of which I was beginning to think I possessed a moderate share.

"Miss Maitland," said Harry, at the close of the afternoon, when the children had finished the preparation of the lessons for the following day, "do you know our sister Meta is coming home next week. I am so glad."

"I am glad also if you are, Harry. Are you very fond of your sister, Miss Meta?"

"Oh, yes," answered the boy, heartily.

"She's not so pretty as Sylvia," explained Arthur, as if he feared his brother were misleading me as to her pretensions.

"Well, I think she is," said Daisy; "she is so kind."

"But kind's not pretty, you little goose."

"Yes it is; Jane says, 'handsome is as handsome does,' so there now."

I could not forbear smiling, but was compelled to reprove the little prattler: "You must not say 'there now,' Daisy, at the end of your sentences. It is a very bad habit, and not at all ladylike."

"Serve you right, Miss," muttered Arthur, as Daisy hung her head.

"When is your sister coming?" I asked, anxious that the children should continue their present theme.

"On Thursday, I think. You know she's been living with grandma and aunties for three months. She had a fever, and was sent away for fear we would all take it."

"'Should all take it,' would be better, Harry," I said mildly, loathe to correct the manly little fellow, but doing it from a sense of justice to the others.

"Thank you, Miss Maitland : I will try to remember," and Harry continued, quite unembarrassed, "I know you will like Meïa, Miss Maitland ; everybody does ; the house has been quite lonely without her."

At this moment the dinner bell rang, and I left the children in the school-room, where tea was served for them by Jane, and after a hurried rush to my room to smooth my hair and wash my hands, I joined the family at dinner.

I was glad that the lawyer had made it a special condition, when entering on an engagement for me with Mrs. Maxwell, that I should sit at table with the family ; and was more thankful to him for the words in which he made known to me the fact : "Your mother was a lady. Miss Elcanor, you know, both by birth and education, and your father was certainly a gentleman, by the latter, if not by the former. You are as good as the Maxwell's any day (and perhaps a shade better, he added, *sotto voce*), so I don't see why you should eat your meals at a different table."

For this consideration from one, whose sensibilities were, as I supposed, by no means too acute, I was truly grateful ; for it seemed as if this trifling circumstance lent a dignity both to myself and my position, which it would have been hard to maintain, had I been entirely cut off from the society of those with whom, notwithstanding my dependence, I still felt, in my heart, on terms of perfect equality.

This privilege however, though it satisfied my self-respect, did not afford me much pleasure ; as, during meal times, the

members of the family very rarely addressed me, and I was not enough interested in the people and subjects they discussed to be entertained by the conversation, which went on independent of me.

They were all perfectly polite however, when they remembered my presence ; but it was this remembering that was significant of how little importance they considered me. But I *was* nothing to them but the children's governess, so what more could be expected of them ?

I had nothing to find fault with in any of them, unless it was Miss Maxwell's hauteur and reserve, which I thought, notwithstanding our relative positions, was uncalled for, from a girl of my own age, and showed a lack of good feeling towards one situated as she knew I was.

Mrs. Maxwell belonged to the managing class of women, and I conceived that on this she prided herself. She managed her house, her children, and her servants in a wonderful manner ; and I already suspected that she could manage her husband also at times, if she set herself to do it. The latter seemed to be of rather an easy-going temperament, and so far as I could judge, was both a devoted husband and affectionate father.

He could however be very decided in some matters, as I had had occasion to observe, and when once he got on one of his "obstinacies," as afterwards I heard his wife call them, there was no moving him.

Of Sylvia Maxwell's character, I could not judge. She was as yet a sealed book to me, but her beauty excited my intensest admiration. I had never seen any one so beautiful, and could not forbear looking at her, as often as opportunity

offered, though careful I should not be discovered doing so. She looked very lovely that day, in her dinner dress (with a sweet child-like loveliness, somewhat at variance with the haughty manner already referred to), and I did not wonder that Mr. Percy Carstairs, to whom I had been introduced on entering the room, should apparently find her so. She could unbend to others, if not to me, as I soon observed, for Sylvia, during dinner, was very bright and fascinating, and even tender, I thought, to this fascinating young gentleman, of whom I could not help wondering if he were the "beau," referred to by Daisy in the morning.

Dinner over, I had no further opportunity of judging, for leaving the gentlemen to their wine, Mrs. Maxwell and her daughter repaired to the drawing-room, and, as I had never been invited to join them there, I betook myself into my own room, and early in the evening to bed, thankful that another day was over, and I was at liberty to lay down my weary head on my pillow, and it might be, in my dreams, hold converse with the loved ones, whose memories were often present to my sleeping as well as my waking hours.

CHAPTER III.

It was Saturday morning, and I was seated in the breakfast-room where the family generally sat during the day, (only using the drawing-room in the evening, or when they had company). Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell were my companions in the apartment, and it happened thus :

In the little talk between Mrs. Maxwell and myself, on my arrival at Maxwell, it had been proposed by her, that as the children had no lessons on Saturdays, I should give part of my time (the forenoon generally) to her, to assist in any little matters in which she might require my services ; and I was the more willing to agree to this, that I felt that these might probably be the only glimpses of family life I should have, much dearer to me than the wearisome routine of teaching, to which I seemed destined.

Harry, who was left pretty much to his own devices on holidays, and could be trusted, was absent on some expedition of his own, and the younger children were out walking with their nurse.

I did not know where Sylvia was, probably in her own room reading a novel ; an occupation which I had heard her father say, occupied a good deal of her time.

It seemed quite novel to be sitting there with the master and mistress of the house, who were as yet almost complete strangers to me, but still I liked it, and the work which occupied me, viz., repairing some old lace on which it seemed Mrs.

Maxwell greatly prided herself, but whose best days were apparently over. Mrs. Maxwell herself assisted at the task, and while we worked, and Mr. Maxwell read the newspaper, perfect silence reigned among us, until Mrs. Maxwell, who seemed to have been deeply cogitating on something, suddenly cleared her throat, and addressed her husband : " Well, James, what about that dinner-party ? "

" What dinner-party, my dear ? I have heard nothing of it. "

" You know I was proposing that we should have a dinner-party next week. Meta will be home, and besides it is some-time since we had anybody. "

" My dear, you know quite well that my quiet little Meta doesn't care for dinner parties ; so why have one in her honor ? and then ' not had anybody,' it seems to me as if we were having dinner parties all the time. Remember, my dear, my purse is not so long as it might be, if I *am* a retired gentleman," he added laughing.

" I think I ought to know the length of your purse as well as anyone ; who so well, indeed, when it takes so much ingenuity to keep from reaching the bottom of it ? "

" My dear, you are arguing against yourself," said her husband, with a chuckle.

" Now, James, do be serious ; you know as well as I do how things are going between Sylvia and Percy Carstairs. It is for them chiefly I want to have this party ; you know they had us last, and I am sure expect some attention on our part, to show our approval of the match. It is best to keep the ball rolling, or things might go off between the young people, just when they seem to be progressing so nicely. "

Mr. Maxwell gave a prolonged Whew ! which, when he had

finished deliberately, he replied, teasingly, ' Oh, the real reason comes last, does it? and my little Meta was to have all the honor," and he laughed heartily.

(I was beginning to like Mr. Maxwell, and to feel increased interest in "little Meta.")

" You may laugh, my dear, but I am quite in earnest. If you are so indifferent to your daughter's prospects, I am not, and I think it is quite a duty to encourage Mr. Carstairs as much as we can decently do."

" Really, I don't understand you, Marian ; Mr. Carstairs is very good as young men go, but I don't see anything remarkable about him, do you?"

" No, I don't see anything remarkable ; but consider his family. It is something for a merchant's daughter to marry into a family like the Carstairs, who have been a family for generations."

" It may be so ; but have you considered the purse? For such a family they are positively poor, and Percy is not the man to exert himself to increase their wealth."

" No, I do not suppose he will ever be wealthy, but you can't have everything in one son-in-law ; you can marry Meta to money, if you like, and then you will have both."

" Well, now, who shall we have?" she continued, as if the thing were settled, and her lord and master's full consent to the dinner party had been obtained. " Miss Maitland, would you please bring the writing materials here ; you may as well write the notes to-day, and I will have them sent on Monday. Friday, I think, will be the best day to have them. Meta will be home Thursday, and she can help with the flowers and things ; Sylvia is no good for that sort of thing. Just be ready,

and I will dictate immediately ; but I want to count first how many there will be : Mr. and Mrs. Carstairs, Percy and Robert—four ; then Mr. and Mrs. King—we did not have them last time, and it won't do to leave them out again—that's six ; then we'd better have the Thornton girls—it will be better to have some young ladies, in case it might look as if we feared a rival for Sylvia,—and, oh, James, had'nt we better ask that Philip Newton and his sister ?—that will make ten, beside ourselves : about as many as we can have."

" I wish you wouldn't ask that man, Marian. If there's one thing I dislike more than another, it is a man with a hobby. You know how disagreeable the fellow made himself at Carstairs's, with his temperance humbug. If a man will go rabid on the Temperance question, why can't he keep his notions to himself, and especially at a dinner-party ?"

" You must be just, James. You know it was Mr. Carstairs himself who introduced the subject. Mr. (or rather Dr. Newton, for it seems he is a passed M.D.) did not seek the discussion."

" Well, I don't want to give him a chance in my house ; so please don't ask them."

" But, James, the Carstairs evidently think very highly of him, and I have heard others express themselves in the same way. We will be meeting them everywhere, and why act as if we were so sensitive to his opinions ? He can't possibly do us any harm with them."

" Well, I declare," said Mr. Maxwell, evidently cooling down a little after his outburst : " If we must please the Carstairs, I suppose we must ; ask the fellow if you have a mind !" and he resumed his paper as if tired of the subject.

Mrs. Maxwell proceeded to dictate and I to write the notes, in what I considered my best style, and as good penmanship was really one of my few well-acquired accomplishments, the notes gave perfect satisfaction, and were safely deposited in Mrs. Maxwell's writing desk, for transmission to their several destinations, in the beginning of the week. This accomplished, I again resumed my lace-mending, and Mrs. Maxwell also took up her work, but I fancied her brain was more busily occupied than her hands, as she no doubt planned the details of her dinner-party, and perhaps also the details of a wedding-party, which she saw in prospect, as the not far off consummation of the good management she had displayed in bringing it about.

My own thoughts, I must confess, were straying in the same direction.

"And so Miss Sylvia has a beau, and a real one too; and we will soon have a wedding in the house," and I became lost in a vision of wedding finery, quite bewildering in its grandeur and beauty, and forgot for the moment that it would probably be a very small share, or no share at all, I should have in the wedding festivities.

And then I reproached myself, that I could even think of such things, and mother little more than a month in her grave. Could it be that I was already forgetting? No! not that; but the buoyancy of youth was already asserting itself. I was a girl, just like other girls, and these feminine vanities dear to my heart, as to the hearts of most of them; but I knew not whether I was most glad or sorry, that I could still take an interest in such things. Unconsciously, I began to look forward to the coming of the second Miss Maxwell, though I

scarcely know what it was I expected from it, but it was pleasant to look forward to something, and I had not forgotten Harry's assurance, that I should like his sister, or her father's pet cognomen, "little Meta."

Thursday came, but Meta had not yet arrived. The children, who were to have a half-holiday in the afternoon to welcome their sister, were busily preparing their lessons for the next day, when Sylvia entered, and, contrary to custom, came up to the table around which we were seated, and, lifting Daisy on her lap, seated herself, saying, "Miss Maitland, don't you think the children should have a holiday this afternoon? My sister is coming, you know, and they are so fond of her."

"Mrs. Maxwell has already requested that they might be freed from lessons this afternoon," I replied, a little stiffly, wondering from whence had sprung Miss Maxwell's unusual affability, and interest in the children's concerns.

"Ah! that's nice: aren't you glad, Harry?"

"Yes," said Harry, very shortly for him.

"I expect we *are* glad," exclaimed Arthur, "and most glad that Meta is coming home."

"And what does Daisy say?" asked Sylvia, fondling the child.

"I didn't say anything," answered practical Daisy, and the boys laughed.

Sylvia looked a little annoyed, but recovering herself, laughed too. "You are all too smart for me here," she said, "I had better go. I would like to see you after lunch, Miss Maitland; will you come to my room, please?"

"Certainly," I replied, very much surprised at the request, and wondering what Miss Maxwell could possibly want with me in her private apartment.

As soon as the door closed on his sister, Arthur exclaimed, "Sylvia's up to something, Miss Maitland ; guess she has a job for you this afternoon ; that's the way she always managed Miss Claxton. It won't be many half-holidays she'll let you have."

"Arthur, hold your tongue, and attend to your lessons," I said sternly, my cheeks flushing in spite of myself.

Arthur's words had somewhat prepared me for what awaited me, when, half-an-hour after lunch, I knocked at Miss Maxwell's door, and was requested to enter.

"Sit down, Miss Maitland," said Sylvia politely. "I have a little piece of work I would like you to do for me this afternoon ; I want this dress altered a little, for to-morrow evening," she continued, producing a soft blue crepe dinner dress from her wardrobe. "Jane is no earthly use for anything in the shape of dressmaking. She's a mere nursery-maid, and it is so absurd mamma won't allow us a maid for ourselves. She says we can't afford it. nor yet to have a *modiste* employed every time a dress wants altering. See," and she began to point out what she would like done.

It seemed as if all the pride of my mother's family rose up in arms at this cool request, and it was on my lips to say, "You have mistaken my engagement, Miss Maxwell ; I am employed as the children's governess, and not to supply the deficiencies of your so called lady's maid," but I hesitated, and to hesitate was to yield. I remembered my position ; I remembered, that if I refused this, and was dismissed in consequence, it might only be to enter a family, where I might be asked to perform more menial offices, than that now required of me. Battling with the indignation I am sure Miss Maxwell

had perceived, I replied, "I am afraid, Miss Maxwell, you will find I am as poor a dressmaker as Jane; but I will do what I can."

"I am sure you will do it well," returned Sylvia, smiling; "your fingers look just as if they were made for dainty pieces of needlework;" and giving me the materials required for my work, and smoothing her hair and adjusting it at the pier glass, she left me to it, and the reflections it called forth.

The afternoon passed slowly away, and as I particularly disliked sewing of the kind I was engaged with, I found the hours twice as long as those usually spent in teaching.

I heard the bustle of Meta's arrival in the hall, and the voices of the children as they eagerly welcomed her; and then the young ladies ascend to the apartment of the former, situated on the same floor as that of Miss Maxwell. In a few minutes they again descended, and I heard and saw nothing more of any of them until half-past five, when Sylvia came up to dress for dinner; and my work, just being completed, I was thanked and dismissed, Miss Maxwell expressing herself, as very much satisfied with the manner in which I had accomplished it.

When I went down to dinner, half-an-hour later, I found the family just about to take their places at table, and was introduced by Mrs. Maxwell to her step-daughter. "This is Miss Maitland, Meta," she said, quietly, and we exchanged bows, as we took our seats: the conversation, which had been interrupted by my entrance, being resumed as soon as the covers were removed. Mr. Maxwell was in excellent spirits, and seemed delighted to have his second daughter home again, and plied her well with questions relative to her visit with his wife's relations, to all of which she replied in a happy girlish manner,

which I found very fascinating, in contrast to Sylvia's dignified manner ; as also the sweet tender face, which was certainly not nearly so pretty as that of her elder sister, but infinitely more winning, to me at least, if not to others. I felt sure I should love Meta Maxwell, and though, as usual, I was scarcely addressed, I listened with much more interest to the conversation going on among the others than I generally felt, and was actually sorry when the meal, which I generally found so tedious, came to an end.

When I retired to my own room, (how I wished they had asked me for once to join them in the drawing-room), I considered if it were possible the friendship I already longed for, could ever be established between Meta Maxwell and myself. I scarcely hoped it, and yet asked myself, (as I recalled the pale-faced, soft-eyed girl, who had sat opposite to me at table, and occasionally looked at me with apparent interest, while she talked to the others), "Why not?" but the question was left unanswered, for it remained with Meta herself to say whether it could be so.

CHAPTER IV.

“Miss Maitland, would you like to help me this afternoon?” asked Meta, as we finished lunch on the following day. “You know mamma depends on me to arrange the flowers and some other little matters, and will, I daresay, if you would really like it, agree to another half-holiday ; will you not, mamma?”

“I am afraid, Meta, the children will be spoiled with so many holidays ; but if you think you will really require Miss Maitland to assist you, I have no serious objections.”

As Meta thanked her mother, I looked gratefully at the former ; for I more than suspected her request was but a device to give me pleasure, and not that she really required any assistance in her work.

What a happy afternoon that was, very different from the previous one, for as Meta and I occupied ourselves with the innumerable little arrangements and alterations, she thought necessary to make in the different apartments, we gradually grew more intimate, and I became more and more enamored of the young girl, for whom, despite our recent acquaintance, I had already conceived a life long friendship.

I had never felt any great regard for the girls I had come in contact with at school ; and the society of my father and mother had almost sufficed for me, out of school hours. Neither was I favorite with my young companions, and I do not wonder that such should have been the case, for there is apt to be a self-absorption about an only child, neither agree-

able nor winning to those who, happening to be members of a large family themselves, have been obliged to realize that they are but units among units, and permit their peculiarities to be rubbed down, by constant contact, and the brothers and sisters, whose equal right to consideration and regard, they are forced to acknowledge.

I did not imagine that Meta had, as yet, felt any drawing towards me such as I felt towards her, for I belived it was out of the simple kindness of her heart she had secured my help that afternoon ; and I was the more convinced of this, from being an unwilling listener to a dialogue with her mother, as I was engaged in dusting some delicate ornaments in the drawing-room ; they being seated in the little card-room, which opened from the apartment, but had also a door communicating with the hall, by which they had entered, and were consequently unaware of my vicinity. Meta had evidently forgotten her request, that I should leave the work with which we had been occupied together in the breakfast-room, and attend first to the vases in the drawing-room, that they might be ready for the flowers she had left me to arrange on the lawn, where the gardener had brought them.

I felt very guilty,, when I heard her say : “ Mamma, will you ask Miss Maitland to join us in the drawing-room this evening ? ”

“ I don't think so, Meta ; there is no necessity for doing so.”

“ I suppose not, but I wish you would. She seems so sad, poor girl ; I think it would be a kindness to try and cheer her up.”

“ I would like to act as kindly towards Miss Maitland as possible. She is a minister's daughter, and I believe her mother

was of very good family, and so far as that goes, she might, with perfect propriety, associate with any of our guests ; but you know, Meta, it does not work well to be too familiar with people in such a position as hers now is. They are apt to presume on it."

"I am quite sure Miss Maitland will never presume on any kindness. I have read her character, as far as that goes, already," answered Meta warmly ; and in my heart of hearts I thanked her for the simple tribute.

"Well, you can ask her to join us to-night, if you like : we need not repeat it too often."

"No, mamma, you had better ask her yourself, or she might think I had been interceding for her."

Feeling how awkward it should be for all parties, did they come into the drawing-room, and make the discovery of my presence, I hastily finished my work, and, slipping quietly out of the room, returned to the breakfast-room, where, sometime afterwards, Meta joined me.

When all our preparations were completed, and I was about to ascend to my room to dress, (for though on ordinary occasions I was not expected to make any alteration in my afternoon toilet, I thought to-right I might venture to dress like the rest) Mrs. Maxwell, who was preceding me up the staircase, turned and said quietly, "Will you join us in the drawing-room this evening, Miss Maitland?" and, for Meta's sake, I pocketed my pride, and replied, "I shall be very happy."

Reader, this was my first dinner-party, so you need not wonder, that as I braided my hair, and put on my best dress (a black silk one, heavily trimmed with crape), my hands trembled, and the flush of nervous excitement mounted to my

usually pale cheeks. I had sometimes, it is true, been "out to dinner," with some of the members of my father's congregation, and had also occasionally, in my father's house, helped to entertain a passing guest ; but a dinner-party, properly so called, was a new ordeal, and one from which I involuntarily shrank, though unwilling to excuse myself, which I might easily have done, had I been so minded.

My toilet completed, I was at a loss whether I ought to wait till the dinner-bell rang, and then descend to the dinning-room as usual, or repair now to the drawing-room, and meet the guests beforehand.

It was the first time I had keenly felt the irksomeness of my position, and, as the time was fast approaching for the guests to arrive, I was in great distress, fearing to appear presumptuous if I descended early, and equally dreading that Mrs. Maxwell might reprove my rudeness, did I enter the dining-room after the guests were seated.

I felt it a humiliation even to have to inquire, but, as I fancied I heard Meta still stirring in her room, I resolved to go and ask her to direct me.

"Oh, you had better go down with me," said Meta, brightly, when I had timidly knocked at her door, and made known my errand. "It will be more pleasant to meet the people beforehand, you know ; just wait till I pin this flower in my hair, and I am ready."

"Allow me to pin it for you," I said eagerly, positively glad of an opportunity of doing something for her. She seated herself at once in the nearest chair, and handed me the flower, smiling, which, when I had pinned among her chesnut locks, I did a very silly thing : I stooped and kissed the hair on which

the flower rested, with something, I should fancy, of the feeling with which a devotee might salute the patron saint, to whom he believes himself indebted for all the good his lot possesses.

I was as much astonished as Meta could be, at this impulsive action, and blushed with confusion as soon as it was done. But Meta, though for a moment she looked at me with surprise, out of her soft grey eyes, only said quietly, "Thank you, Miss Maitland; we are friends are we not?" and I was too stupid to make other reply than a simple "yes." Had Meta guessed that in my lonely and desolate condition I had longed for a friend? It seemed indeed as if this young girl had an instinctive knowledge of the hearts and desire of others; and I was beginning to think, that it must simply be, because Meta in one sense loved everybody, and that everybody, as Harry said, "loved Meta."

When we reached the drawing-room, where the others were already assembled, Meta contrived to keep me near her, and when the guests were announced, introduced them to me as they paid greeting to herself. Dr. Newton and his sister were the last to arrive, and as they were strangers to his second daughter, Mr. Maxwell brought them, after a few minutes conversation with Mrs. Maxwell and Sylvia, to introduce them to her. This done, he turned away, without repeating the introduction for my benefit; and feeling hurt at what, though I knew it was no intentional insult, but a mere oversight, I was about, blushing, to withdraw to a distance, when Meta hastened to rectify her father's error.

"Let me in turn introduce to you Miss Maitland, Miss Newton; Dr. Newton, Miss Maitland;" and we had just ex-

changed bows, when dinner was announced.

Mr. Maxwell led the way to the dining-room with Mrs. Carstairs, Mr. Carstairs taking Mrs. Maxwell ; Percy of course took Sylvia, and Robert devoted himself to Miss Newton and one of the Miss Thorntons ; Mr. King took in his wife and the other Miss Thornton, and Dr. Newton Meta and myself.

I was very well pleased with this arrangement, for I was very favorably impressed with the earnest and handsome countenance of the man whose hobby had so much annoyed Mr. Maxwell.

Like most dinner-parties, this one was rather stupid at first, the conversation chiefly consisting of disjointed utterances between those seated next to each other ; but Dr. Newton and Meta seemed already to be becoming good friends, judging from the flow of talk which went on between them. I could distinctly hear everything said by the gentleman, (who though engrossed, so far as conversation went, with the daughter of the house, was also very attentive to my own wants) ; but I could only catch the sweet sentences of Meta's voice, as she conversed with her new acquaintance, and wish I possessed the quiet and modest self possession which could make her thus to enjoy conversation with a stranger : and the frank, unaffected, girlish manner, which I fancied he, like myself, found so winning.

When dinner was about half through, I suddenly became aware that conversation among the rest was becoming general, and was surprised, and a little startled, to find that they had actually got on the theme so much disliked by the master of the house, and the discussion of which, I had heard him say, Philip Newton should have no chance to introduce at his table.

" Well," said old Mr. Carstairs, whose voice was the first I

distinctly heard, "I don't think total abstinence is such a bad thing. Of course, it is hard for an old man like me to give up his wine after being accustomed to it all his life ; but for the young people, I think it would be a splendid thing if they had nothing to do with it."

"But, my dear friend," said Dr. King, the clergyman of the church the Maxwell's attended, "why do you advance such a theory as this? If a young man can enjoy his wine in moderation, as I have done all my life, why must he, because some abuse this gift, like many others, give up entirely, what had never done him any harm, and may be the means of doing him a great deal of good."

"My dear sir," said Philip Newton, so sternly, that I looked up at him in surprise, "it is such as you that temperance reformers have to dread. You do twice as much mischief as twenty drunkards. *They* are beacons which warn a man of his danger; *you* allure him to destruction by your *moderate* example." "Forgive me, dear sir," he ended, becoming aware how sternly he had spoken, and that all eyes were now fixed on him, "If I have spoken too strongly ; and forgive me also, Mr. Maxwell. I believe I forgot, for the moment, that I was at a private dinner table, and not on a public platform."

Mr. Maxwell bowed, but made no other reply. He was evidently annoyed that such a discussion had arisen, but knew not how to put a stop to it, if it were the will of his guests that it should proceed. As for Dr. King, he replied, good-humoredly, "Well, Dr. Newton, I can perceive the force of your assertion in one way, but I must say, utterly fail to see it in the other. You might as well argue that the moderate eater is the destroyer of the glutton ; the moderate reader of the book-

worm ; the man of moderate recreation of the idler and spendthrift."

"I hold, Dr. King, that there is no comparison between those things you have named, and the greatest curse of our nation—strong drink. The glutton and the bookworm hurt no one but themselves, and though the idler and spendthrift may blast the prospects of his family, so far as creature comforts go, he cannot possibly bring upon them the utter misery and ruin which too often falls to the lot of those who have a drunkard for their husband or father. I should imagine that the consideration of the fate of the thousands of poor women, whose happiness has been blasted, and home and family destroyed, by this monster fiend of drunkenness, would be sufficient to rob your wine of its flavor, for ever and ever."

"Yes, that is the worst of it," said mild old Mr. Carstairs ; "it is the women who suffer ; and how seldom, comparatively speaking, do we meet a female drunkard, even among the lower classes. Such a thing is almost unheard of among the upper ten."

"Unheard of it may be, Mr. Carstairs, but by no means non-existent. Drunkenness is, I believe, much commoner even among the ladies of the upper classes than most people have any idea of. As for 'drinking,' we all know how common that is. It is very hard, I believe, to draw the line where 'drinking,' stops, and drunkenness begins."

"I should fancy it was very easy," said Dr. King, with the suspicion of a sneer. "You are young, Dr. Newton ; when you are as old as I am, you will smile at your present enthusiasm."

"God forbid !" said Dr. Newton, solemnly.

"I wish you would explain to us your last remark, Dr. Newton," said Mr. Carstairs. "How do you mean that it is hard to draw the line between drunkenness and drinking?"

"In this way, dear sir, that I believe there are hundreds of men and women, or, I might say gentlemen and ladies, often, and sometimes daily, under the influence of drink, who would scorn to be called, or to call themselves, drunkards. I hold, that the young man or young girl, who has been conscious even of a momentary giddiness after her glass of wine at dinner, has been under the *influence* of liquor, and has taken the first step in the downward path of drunkenness."

"Come now, Philip, you are going too far when you attack the ladies," exclaimed Percy Carstairs, laughing.

The hot blood had been mounting to Mr. Maxwell's forehead. He was evidently very angry and could not control it longer. "Friends," he said, "I think this discussion is becoming very unseemly. Please let us begin a new one with the dessert."

The chief speakers had been too busy to observe the discomfort of their host, but with ready politeness began to discourse on other themes; Dr. Newton evidently being careful, both to lead and follow in those such as were introduced, so that there might be no lack of conversation, consequent on the sudden conclusion put by the master of the house to their previous one.

In the drawing-room that evening, I heard Philip Newton, who seemed already to covet the good opinion of this young girl, saying to Meta, "Were you shocked, Miss Meta, by my remarks during dinner?"

Meta paused, then replied very seriously, "A little. I fear

your father thought me very rude, and perhaps you also?"

"No," said Meta again quietly, "I respect earnestness."

"I say, Philip, my boy," said Percy Carstairs, coming up at this moment, and linking his arm in that of his friend, "you seem dreadfully in earnest on this total abstinence question."

"It is the purpose of my life," said Philip, with grave emphasis. "How I wish Percy you would join me in advancing it."

CHAPTER V.

"Meta, my dear, why don't you take your wine? I have noticed for several days you have left it untouched."

"I have not taken any for some weeks, papa."

"Why not?"

"Because I don't feel that I want it."

"But you *look* as if you wanted it, child; you do not seem at all strong yet; take your wine, it will do you good."

"That's what grandma and aunties always said," returned Meta, meditatively.

"And quite right, too," said her father; "you need all the help you can get to put some color into those pale cheeks; doesn't she Marian?"

"Of course she does; but Meta has taken some strange fancies into her head lately."

Mr. Maxwell looked as if he were afraid to ask what those fancies might be, and only said, "Meta, if you wish to please me, you will take your wine regularly. I think you require it, and so does your mother."

Judging from results, Meta had no desire to please her father, for her wine at dinner remained day after day untouched; but no further notice was taken of the circumstance.

This was about a month after the dinner party recorded in my last chapter: a month, in the course of which Meta and I had indeed become friends in the truest sense of the word. I not only felt now, that I loved Meta Maxwell as I had never

loved any but my near and dear ones, but also felt sure her warm affection was my own. It is very customary to sneer at girl-friendships, and often they are but a mixture of affectation and folly, but looking back through the years which have passed since first we pledged ourselves to each other as friends, I have never had reason to regret or feel ashamed, of what we then considered, and still consider, a sacred bond.

During this month also, things had come to a crisis between Sylvia and Percy Carstairs, in so far, that the proposal, for which Mrs Maxwell had planned and watched, and for which Sylvia had looked and acted her most attractive, had actually been made ; but strange to say, had not yet been accepted by the young lady. Much to her father's surprise, and mother's annoyance, Sylvia had requested a month to think about it ; and though Percy Carstairs himself, and his family also, evidently did not relish this off-hand fashion of receiving a proposal which they considered, did Sylvia Maxwell much honor, the former had agreed, to what he probably imagined was merely a fit of coyness on the part of his beloved, which might be intended to enhance the yielding, which he knew would come.

During this month also, the acquaintance had increased, and, so far as some of the family were concerned, friendship ripened, with Dr. Newton and his sister. Notwithstanding Mr. Maxwell's coldness, which, though not particularly marked, was quite apparent, Dr. Newton seemed to find his visits at Maxwell very agreeable ; but this is not to be wondered at, considering that the lady of the house both received and invited such visits with particular affability, and the young ladies were always both polite and friendly to himself and sister.

Miss Newton was a rather quiet, sad-looking girl, of twenty-eight or thereabouts, who impressed me with the conviction, that her life had not flowed entirely in smooth channels, but rather that it had been through some stormy scenes of trial and sorrow, she had reached the present calm. She was also very reserved, but seemed to have taken a great fancy to Meta, which was to some extent reciprocated by the latter ; though I doubt if she found Miss Newton any more communicative to her, than to the rest of her acquaintance. Very little was known in W—— of the Newton's previous history, for it was only during the last three months they had come to the place, and that through the recommendation of Mr. Carstairs, who had been on very intimate terms with Philip's father. The latter had left Scotland in early manhood, and shortly after his marriage, to settle in America, where a brother had already found a home, and fast increasing wealth.

During the years that followed, communication gradually became very rare between the former friends, and at length ceased altogether, until Philip, grown to manhood, and an orphan, had written to Mr. Carstairs, of whom his father had often spoken, telling him of his intention to return to Scotland with his only sister, and settle down in some place, where he could advantageously practise his profession.

As there happened at the time to be a very good vacancy for a medical man in W——, Mr. Carstairs at once wrote, and advised him to come thither, extending to him a cordial welcome to his own home, until a suitable house could be obtained, and arrangements made, for entering on a home of his own.

It had only been a few weeks before my arrival at Maxwell

that this had been arranged ; and only since my arrival there, that Dr. Newton had began the practice of his profession.

While staying at "The Lindens," Mr. Carstairs's estate, which was about a mile out of the town, Dr. Newton and the sons of his host, though differing widely in almost every characteristic, became quite intimate ; and the warm affection, which Mr. Carstairs had felt for Philip's father, seemed to have been transferred by him, and bestowed by his family on the son, who was also a general favorite in the community, though some affected to sneer at his "peculiar views," which they assured him would certainly injure him in his profession.

But at this Philip only smiled a "be it so," and went on his way, not only professionally, but both publicly and privately, seeking to advance in every possible way, the principles, the advancement of which, I had heard him tell Percy Carstairs, was the purpose of his life.

Since the evening of the dinner-party, when the subject of total abstinence had been so forcibly brought before us, Meta and I had sometimes taken counsel together on the subject, which seemed from that time to have taken considerable hold of her mind.

It began by her asking me one day, if I thought it was true what Philip Newton had said about drinking and drunkenness ; but I knew less about it than she did herself, for I had never even heard this question of total abstinence discussed, and though I had never seen wine in my father's house, except during his own, and my mother's fatal sickness ; I knew not whether they held strong views on either side.

As for me, I had never tasted a glass of wine during their lifetime ; and when I came to Maxwell, though wine was

placed on the table every day, had merely from habit continued its disuse, and therefore, though inclined to sympathise with Philip Newton's views on the question, did not think it necessary to pledge myself, against what I had never indulged, and never meant to indulge in. Once, when I said this to Philip, for we had also become good friends through Meta's influence, I believe, he replied, "I believe you are mistaken, Miss Maitland. You might refrain from drinking wine or such beverages all your life, so far as others can judge, merely as a matter of taste, and principle have nothing to do with it ; whereas, if you give your name and influence to the temperance cause, you proclaim to the world your disapproval of the drinking customs, and your belief in the temporal and moral ruin they are bringing on our homes and country."

And so it came about, that through Philip Newton's influence, I became a total abstainer, both by precept and example ; and I have never had cause to regret, but great reason to thank God, that so I was led to put on the badges of those, whose warfare is next in importance to that of the Christian, and "well done" is we believe equally well assured.

As for Meta, she had never tasted wine since the night already referred to. It seemed as if Philip's assertion had carried such weight, and indeed filled her mind with such a horror of the wonted beverage, that she could not bear, even in spite of her father's displeasure, to put it between her lips.

"How I wish, Nora," she said one day, "that papa would allow me to do as you have done. It hurts my conscience, now that I have thoroughly made up my mind about it, not to act according to what I believe is right ;" but Mr. Maxwell, when appealed to, more than once, by his daughter, was firm

as a rock. "No, Meta, you will never get my consent to such absurdity. If you take this step, you will incur my severest displeasure. You have always, hitherto, been a docile and obedient child ; what has come to you, that you have learned to dispute the wisdom of what you know your family approve ? Your so-called temperance notions have with them a reproach to the rest of us ; anyone would imagine we were a family of drunkards."

Meta was silenced. This was one of Mr. Maxwell's "obstinacies," in which his wife, who knew him best, said it was hopeless to move him ; so what could Meta do ? either enter into strife with the father, who had ever been most kind and indulgent towards his family, and especially to herself, his favorite child, or submit to his decision. She did the latter, very unwillingly ; and for a time the subject lay at rest between them.

I had discovered, long ere this, what a tender conscience Meta's was ; and had already felt the ennobling influence of personal contact with her. It had not taken me long to get over the feeling of inferiority I had at first been conscious of in Sylvia's presence, for now I did not compare her, so lovely, so dignified, so beautifully dressed, with myself, so plain, so poor, in proportion so meanly clothed ; I compared her with Meta, whose superiority I knew was real, and (though the latter had never made me feel as Sylvia had done) beside whom she suffered in contrast. In Meta's presence, one never felt conscious of clothes, and scarcely conscious of self, and this partly I believe, that Meta herself was seldom conscious of either. What a comfort was this to one so self-contained, self-conscious, and I might almost say so self absolute, as myself.

My mind was growing, and my heart expanding, day by

day, from this companionship, and Maxwell was becoming to me, not merely the scene of a daily routine of uncongenial duties, but the place, which contained the only one I had learned to love besides my father and mother. But I was learning to love my pupils too, and they were learning to love me. This also, I believe, was Meta's doing.

At first, Mrs. Maxwell greatly disapproved the intimacy, which she could not but perceive had sprung up between her daughter and myself, and remonstrated with Meta on the subject ; but by degrees I had also won a measure of her regard, and though she still thought it undignified in Meta to call me Nora, and seek my society as she did, had ceased to take any further notice of it.

As for Sylvia, she had been very indignant at what she considered Meta's bad taste, and lack of self respect ; and had only put on additional hauteur in her demeanor towards me, but of late, this had for some unaccountable reason, changed, and she also, at times, began to seek my society, often by so doing depriving us of the precious moments we had been wont to spend together.

My evenings were not now spent in my own room, but, when not invited to the drawing-room, generally in the school-room, for here Meta could sometimes join me, without exciting particular comment, and here also I could better pursue the studies which, by Meta's advice, I had begun. Lamenting to her one day my inefficiency to follow the profession I had begun, she said : " It is not too late, dear Nora ; why not commence now, and study a little every evening, and so repair the deficiencies in your education ? " It was like an inspiration. Why not even yet atone to myself for former neglect

and idleness? Encouraged by Meta's help and approval, and feeling also as if the approval of my dear parents was present with me, I hopefully set myself to overcome the difficulties in my path, and resolved still to become, if not an accomplished woman, at least a more improved one.

CHAPTER VI.

The month of Sylvia's probation had nearly expired, when, one Saturday, she asked me, as she sometimes did, to do something for her in her own room ; and as I had at first submitted to the supplementary duties she contrived to find for me, I had no excuse to offer on the present occasion, though very much disappointed at having to give up a walk with Meta which was my great Saturday afternoon treat, and on which we had just been setting out when Sylvia called me.

" Could you not wait, Sylvia, till we return ? The best part of the day will be over if we do not go now, and Nora has so few walks."

I don't think Miss Maitland will mind ; I won't detain her long." This was Sylvia's way of ignoring things she had not a mind to perceive, so there was nothing for it but to lay aside my hat, and join her as requested.

To-day it was some trifling repairs of gloves, &c., with which she occupied the hours of my weekly half-holiday, and my heart burned with indignation at the utter selfishness she displayed in so doing ; but I had not been long seated at my work, when I began to suspect Sylvia had other motives to-day, in seeking my presence, than those which furnished the ostensible reason.

Though she pretended to read, she did not seem to be much engrossed by her book, but would lay it aside every now and again, to talk in much more confidential strains, than she had

ever adopted with me. At length, when she had vainly tried to lead me into a conversation relative to Percy Carstairs and her own love affairs, she asked, abruptly, "Don't you pity me, Miss Maitland?"

"No," I said, really surprised now, and eager to know what was coming.

"Don't you know I have to decide the question, 'to be or not to be,' next week, and I am in a perfect dilemma."

"I don't know why you should be in a dilemma," I replied, quite seriously. "I should fancy you would know whether you wanted it 'to be or not to be.'"

"No indeed, that is just what I do *not* know," returned Sylvia, laughing; "I wish you would give me your advice. Meta would be the natural person for me to consult with, but we have no sympathy with each other; she has such strait-laced notions about things, I have no patience with her. We are not like sisters at all."

"I would not suppose you would require anyone's advice about such a thing; your own heart should tell you what to do."

"That sounds exactly like Meta; but if my heart do not tell me, what then?"

"If your heart do not distinctly say 'to be,' I should think you would decide that it is 'not to be;' but——" I hesitated.

"Well, but what?"

"But, I think, having encouraged Mr. Carstairs thus far, you are almost committed to accepting him."

"I am afraid you are right. If there were only him, it would not be so difficult."

Sylvia said this with a look of childish distress, which would no doubt have been infinitely bewitching to Percy Carstairs,

if not accompanied by her present words; but to me, the expression savored only of affectation, and the words were perfectly incomprehensible.

As she paused for me to say something, I asked, "Has Mr. Carstairs a rival, then?"

"Why, you know as well as I do; and I am not sure that I do not prefer Dr. Newton to Percy."

"Dr. Newton!" I exclaimed, in astonishment: "I don't think——"

"You don't think what?" asked Sylvia, eagerly.

"I don't think Dr. Newton is Mr. Carstairs' rival," I continued; but almost trembling at my audacity. "I think it is Meta;" and there stopped. The crimson tide was rising to Sylvia's cheeks; I could not tell whether of mortification or anger. "Meta!" I never thought of such a thing. She is a mere child, and never had an admirer in her life."

"You forget that she is only eighteen months younger than yourself," I returned, mildly; "and she has an admirer now." If Sylvia were trifling with Percy, only in the hope of gaining Dr. Newton, I thought it well she should be undeceived as soon as possible.

"You must think me very conceited, Miss Maitland," said Miss Maxwell afterward, when she had somewhat recovered herself, and was about to dismiss me, "but I trust you will not betray me. Our conversation was of course private."

"I shall consider it so," I said, sorry that she should have had to humble herself to say so much. "I do hope, Miss Maxwell," I added, quite warmly, for I seemed to realize how doubtful a thing was Sylvia's happiness, with a man, the acceptance or non-acceptance of whom, she could discuss with a

stranger like myself, "I do hope that you will be happy as Mr. Carstairs' wife, for it is 'to be,' is it not?"

"I suppose so," said Sylvia, essaying a smile. "Thank you, Miss Maitland, for your kind wishes;" and as she dismissed me, I saw tears on the long lashes, which I fancied were strangers thereto, and my heart melted to the young girl, so soon to be a wife, yet consciously becoming so without the love, which alone could make the union sacred.

The following week the family were called on to congratulate Percy Carstairs and his affianced wife; and shortly began the bustle attendant on the preparations for the wedding festivities, which neither of the families saw any reason to postpone.

Percy, whose allowance from his father was to be increased, as far as the latter's means would admit, from the date of his marriage, rented a villa midway between the town and his father's estate, and here the young couple were to take up house-keeping, as soon as the marriage settlements could be drawn up, and the bride's trousseau prepared.

It was a busy month which followed, and as there was plenty found for me to do, in connection with the innumerable things which required to be attended to, the children had more holidays than they knew what to do with, and Jane was almost at her wits end, between the duties of the nursery, and the endless demands on her time and patience, made by the bride elect, who had always usurped the largest share of her attendance. "Indeed, Miss, I shall be glad when this wedding is over," she said one day, (she was a pretty superior looking girl, and from the first had quite taken my fancy); "Miss Meta scarcely ever requires my attendance, and I will have more

time to attend to the children. It is not easy to be nurse and lady's-maid in one, is it Miss?"

"I suppose not, Jane, but you seem to manage wonderfully."

"Thank you, Miss," said Jane, and buckled to her duties with renewed vigor. I was quite a favorite with the pretty Abigail, who sometimes consulted me on her private affairs, such as the expending of her wages, etc., but never presumed on any interest shown, or help afforded her. Jane was a treasure, and Mrs. Maxwell knew it; and so it came about, that she had many little privileges, not afforded to the other servants, which helped to reconcile her, in some measure, to the confounding duties which were allotted to her.

At length the marriage day came, and it was very like what I suppose most wedding days are: a great deal of bustle, an immense amount of finery, considerable eating and drinking, and a few tears. The bride though, in her rich dress of silk and lace, was lovelier than brides generally are, though all are credited with being lovely; the bridegroom, too, for good looks, must have ranked as a peer among his fellows, and the bridesmaid and groom were a nobler looking couple than one sees every day. Philip Newton and Meta "stood up" together, and as the marriage service went on, I for one, could not help thinking more of the bride I saw in prospect, as Philip's wife, than of the one who was even then pledging herself, for "better and for worse," to the bridegroom of the day,—*"Poor Sylvia!"*—*"Happy Meta!"* were the words which shaped themselves in my thoughts; but who could say how poor the one, or how happy the other?

CHAPTER VII.

It was the Sunday after Sylvia's marriage, and Mr. Carstairs' eldest son, who had left his charge in the south of England, to come and perform the ceremony, was to preach in the afternoon. As I walked to church with Harry and Arthur, for whose good conduct I was responsible during the hours of service, I felt quite rejoiced that the Rev. Mr. Carstairs was to take the place of prosy Dr. King, whose prayers I knew almost off by heart, and whose sermons I listened to with a lazy indifference, which precluded the possibility of deriving any good from what he no doubt considered a stirring discourse.

When we reached the chapel, Mr. and Mrs. Carstairs and Robert, (the latter was very seldom to be seen there), were already in their pew, the first with a look of pride and pleasure on his mild old face, which did my heart good to see. The father's heart (affectionate towards all his family) was evidently bound up in this son, who though so far as features and appearance went, the plainest of the three, was, I could well believe, from what I had seen of him, a son to be proud of.

I respected both the calling he had chosen to follow, and the energy displayed in preferring to carve out a path for himself, rather than depend on what his father could do for him. It filled my heart with something akin to contempt, to see his brothers, grown to manhood, and perfectly capable of working out an independence for themselves, content to receive their pocket money like any school-boy, and thus diminish their

father's means, not too plentiful, by this constant drain upon them.

It was a mystery to me, how any woman could consider it an honor to marry such a man ; but then my ideas were not aristocratic, and I could not understand why "people of family" should prefer such dependence on others, rather than lose caste by engaging in merchandise or other means of gaining a livelihood.

But Frank Carstairs had not lost caste, for the ministry is a lawful calling even for the sons of gentlemen. It remained to be seen whether he had chosen his profession for love of the work, or merely as a genteel way of making a living.

As I noted the earnest manner in which the hymn was read, the fervour of the prayer which followed, and the heart felt eloquence with which the discourse was begun, I could not doubt that the preacher's heart was in his work. Frank Carstairs was a Christian ; the profession of *saving souls*, the one he had chosen.

I knew nothing personally of the saving faith of which his sermon treated, but had known what it was to live in intimate communion, and affectionate companionship, with the father and mother, whose faith and practice so fully harmonized, and could but recognize the ring of the true metal in others, and to some extent, appreciate the christianity, which I never yet had sought to attain.

As the sermon proceeded, I was seized with a deep longing to become possessed of this faith, which alone could save ; but my heart was as hard as a stone ; I wanted to trust, and yet I could not. I wanted to be saved, but would not believe, with the heart belief, which alone could avail. I looked at Meta,

as she sat with her father and mother in the pew in front of me. Her sweet and placid eyes were fixed on the minister's countenance ; she seemed to hang on his words. I knew that in everything that was good, and pure, and true, Meta was all *but* a Christian ; was she with myself, longing to become, not almost, but altogether such an one. How I envied her child-like disposition, when, as she joined the children and myself, for the walk home, she said, "Nora, did not you like the sermon to-day?"

"Yes, indeed, but still it made me uncomfortable."

"Did it? It made me so happy. Nora, I have trusted myself to Jesus ; are not you going to do the same?"

"I wish I could, Meta : but I am not like you. I am hard and cold and proud. I cannot humble myself like the little child Mr. Carstairs was speaking about, whereas to you, I just feel like applying the words which Jesus did, 'For of such are the kingdom of heaven.'"

Meta had no false humility, and did descry the commendation conveyed in my words. She was experiencing all the trust and confidence of a little child, and it never occurred to her to dispute, what had brought her so much happiness.

"You too, Nora, will soon be a child of the Saviour's fold. You are so much stronger than I am, that it is natural you should find it harder to trust than I do, but it will come : I know it will."

Was I stronger than Meta? (or was this her gentle word for pride?) I had never thought so, for ever since we had known each other, her mingled strength and gentleness had filled me with wondering admiration. Was it not she who had strengthened me to overcome my morbid grief ; who had implanted in

me the ambition for self-improvement ; who had taught me to exercise in my little kingdom the strongest law in the universe—the law of love. This, and much more, the strength of Meta's character had done for me. Yes, she was gentle, humble, sweet, and yielding, but she was also strong. I thought so then, and I think so still. Darling Meta !

A week later than this, the newly married pair came home from their tour, and after a grand dinner in their honor at Mr. Carstairs, and a reception at their own house, we all settled down into our old routine, only the house seemed much quieter now, in contrast to the bustle of the last few weeks.

But changes had begun at Maxwell, and, as is often the case, when such occur, seem fated to go on. I was surprised one day, when the children, as a special treat on Harry's birthday, had been taken by their mother, in the carriage, to visit Sylvia, by a timid knock at my room door, and the entrance of Jane, who asked with pinker cheeks than usual, " If you please, Miss, could I speak to you for a few minutes ?"

" Certainly, Jane ; is it about the pattern ? Here it is , I found it this morning. With some slight alterations, I think it will suit you nicely."

" Oh, thank you, Miss : but it wasn't that. You have always been so kind, I thought I would like to tell you, before speaking to Mrs. Maxwell, that I am going to leave."

" Going to leave, Jane ! you surely don't mean that. You were just telling me a short time ago that you thought you should like the place a great deal better now."

" So I would, Miss, but—but—, you see, James Sinclair has spoken, and—and—

" Oh, you have got the offer of a better place," said I,

not understanding Jane's mode of expressing herself.

"Oh! no, Miss, I am going to be married."

"Married, Jane! you are not long in following Miss Maxwell's example; and it is to James Sinclair: do I know him?"

"Oh yes, Miss; he is Dr. Newton's coachman. You have seen him often."

So I had, a good-looking fellow enough, and so far as appearance went, quite a suitable match for pretty Jane; but I recalled something Dr. Newton had been saying during his last visit, and replied gently, "He is a nice looking fellow, Jane, and I don't wonder you fancy him; but is he steady?"

"Oh yes, Miss. I am sure he has been a faithful servant, and when he told the doctor, some weeks ago, that he was thinking of getting married, and asked him if he applied for the 'buss' between this and Newton, would he give him a good character, the doctor said, 'Yes, he could conscientiously recommend him.'"

"But, Jane, (I am sorry to have to tell you this) I have heard Dr. Newton say, lately, that his coachman had taken to drinking, and had come home sometimes recently the worse of liquor."

"Oh I daresay, Miss, but they all take too much sometimes, and it was while his brother was staying in the place for a week, that this happened. James is easily led away."

"Then, dear Jane, I don't think he is the husband to make a woman happy. Take my advice, and give him up, unless he will promise not to touch liquor again."

"Oh, Miss, it is very easy to say 'Give him up,' but servants have feelings like their betters. I love him, and if I don't marry him, I don't care to marry anybody else."

Jane was crying, and the tears were in my own eyes ; but I said firmly, " I believe you love him, Jane, but you can never be happy with a man who even occasionally gets drunk. Better be an old maid than a miserable wife."

" That sounds very well, Miss, but Miss Sylvia expected to be happy, I suppose, when she married Mr. Percy Carstairs ; and I am certain sure *he* gets drunk a little oftener than my James."

I was conscious of a sudden sinking of the heart at Jane's words. The information they conveyed was new to me, but I could not doubt the girl's sincerity ; she knew what she was talking about.

" Jane," I said, after a pause, " I am very much shocked at what you have told me. I had no idea of it before, and I cannot think Miss Maxwell knew it ; but even if what you say be true, Miss Maxwell's misery can never make your happiness. Think what you are doing, before it is too late ; Dr. Newton says that if women would only take a decided stand against the drunkenness which abounds, and refuse to marry men who were not abstainers, half the battle would be won ; for then drinking would not be respectable, as I am sorry to say it is considered by many now, but a disgrace, and the men who indulged in it to be hooted at and despised. I trust, dear Jane, that you will be able to persuade your lover to give up the drink, but if not, I earnestly hope you will take my advice, and have nothing to do with him."

" I know you mean it kindly, Miss, and I thank you, but I don't think he will give up the drink altogether. Perhaps I will be able to persuade him better after we are married."

" *Never*, Jane ; now is your time ; if you give in now, you

can never, humanly speaking, hope to influence him."

Jane left the room in tears, and I also was sad at heart for her and Sylvia's sake. The maid's, however, was likely to be the better lot of the two, for she had her love to aid the endurance, which doubtless both would be called on to suffer.

CHAPTER VIII.

The following Monday, Jane gave Mrs. Maxwell a month's notice, and with some little assistance from Meta and myself, set about her simple preparations for her marriage. Her coming departure was regretted by all the household, and not least by Mrs. Maxwell herself, who declared she should never get another girl to suit so well as Jane had done.

Meta begged her mother to engage the new domestic merely as nursery-maid. "I think it is too much to expect, mamma, of one girl, to act both as nurse and lady's-maid ; and as for me, I do not care to have a maid now that Sylvia has gone, and I am sure no one will be any the wiser, that I do not possess one."

"It does not sound well, Meta, to admit that we do not engage a lady's maid, though, like yourself, I sometimes find them to be more trouble than assistance. We can try it, however, for a time, "she concluded smiling," and so far as you are concerned, it may prove a very temporary arrangement."

Meta blushed, but took no further notice of her mother's words, which I had reason to believe would soon be proved correct.

Many were the lamentations to which I had to listen from Arthur and Daisy, relative to the coming change in the nursery, and though Harry said nothing, possibly feeling that it would be babyish to "make a fuss," I could perceive that the little fellow felt Jane's departure as much as the others.

"Its awfully mean of Jane to go and get married," said Arthur one day to his confidant, Daisy, when the children did not know I was by, "isn't it, Daisy?"

"I don't know, Artie. You know Sylvia got married, and everybody thought it was very nice. Big women always want to get married, I suppose; I know I shall when I am big, for if you don't get married you're an old maid, and I don't think its nice."

"Nice! I think its just as nice as getting married; what's the use?"

"Oh! - - - Artie (it was wonderful the depth of feeling Daisy put into the words), think of the white dresses, and the flowers, and all the pretty things; but then genkleman's don't have any, so *you* don't care."

"I don't see what big women, or big men either, want to get married for. I'm sure Meta doesn't."

"Oh! Artie, you're stupid," whispered Daisy, looking round cautiously, and discovering my presence, but as I smiled encouragingly, she continued: "She's going to get married to the temperance man; I heard Jane telling Susie."

"Dr. Newton is the man," said Harry, quite interested, "that's jolly. I think he's an awful nice man. When he asked me one day, what I was going to be, I said 'I didn't know,' but when I was growed up I wasn't going to be a drink man anyway; and he looked awful pleased, and said I was a noble little fellow, and to be sure and remember."

"Did he?" said Daisy, "that was real nice."

The mistress of the house, the presiding genius of the school-room, and the denizens of the nursery, were at one, it seemed, on the momentous question of Meta's "settlement;" but Mr.

Maxwell's opinion had not yet been asked for, and it remained to be seen how he would act when the question had to be decided, as he only had the power to do.

Though Meta had whispered to me a little secret of her own the previous evening, I was considerably startled when her father abruptly entered the room, where his wife and I were seated at work, as on a previous occasion we had been, when a dinner-party was the theme under discussion, and exclaimed excitedly : "Here's a pretty go ; that fellow has actually asked me for Meta. Sit down, Miss Maitland, you need not run away ; I suppose you know more about this than the rest of us."

I sat down, trembling for Meta, and he continued : "Did you expect this, Marian, and have I only been blind?"

"Of course I expected it, James, and should have supposed you would also. I suppose by 'that fellow,' you mean Dr. Newton. It is not a very respectful way to speak of your daughter's future husband."

"Future husband ! You seem to have the matter nicely settled among you. Pray am I to be consulted on the subject at all ?"

"Certainly, James : I thought you just said that Dr. Newton had been consulting you."

"Consulting me, after he has got my daughter's promise ; that's a little too late, I think."

"I am sure, James, Meta would never promise, unless subject to your approval."

"Oh ! so he says. It's all very fine : but if that's not making a fool of a man, I don't know what is. I suppose this is your doing, asking him to the house, and making so much of

him. You seem to be in a mighty hurry to get the girls married ; no sooner do you get Sylvia off your hands, than you begin to scheme for Meta."

"I have never schemed for Meta, James ; you know she is not the kind of girl one can scheme for ; but for all that, I think (though Dr. Newton has some peculiarities it is true), she will be a very fortunate woman if you permit her to become his wife."

"And what about the money I was to marry her to?"

"Is it possible you do not know Dr. Newton will be very wealthy? He is heir to that uncle of his in America, who is an old man, and has amassed quite a fortune. The Carstairs know all about it, and I have perfect confidence they would not mislead us. I know, James, you will give your consent to this marriage. It would be extremely foolish to act otherwise."

"I have no objections to the fellow," returned Mr. Maxwell, softening, "if only he were not so eccentric, running round the country lecturing, and so forth. He really makes himself ridiculous."

"Well, you know, as I said before, James, you can't have everything ; what did you say to Dr. Newton?"

"Said I would take a couple of days to think about it."

"Well now, James, be sure and give him a cordial answer, when he comes for your decision ; I do think he deserves it."

"I suppose I shall consent ; I can't bear to deny that girl anything ; but I'm not sure about the cordiality. It shall certainly be with reservations at any rate. I must go out, I have been detained too long already," and Mr. Maxwell beat a hasty retreat, more I believe for fear he should break down at the

thought of the separation his consent would entail, than the business which he insinuated was hurrying away.

Two days later, Philip and Meta were made happy, by Mr. Maxwell's consent to their engagement; though one was disappointed at the first, and the other with both, of the reservation with which it was given.

The first was, that Meta, at least until she was twenty-one, should not be asked to pledge herself in any way to the principles what Dr. Newton held so strongly, and the second that the marriage should not take place until a year from the date of their engagement.

"I cannot spare my little girl yet," he said fondly to Meta, when he told her what his answer to Philip was to be, "I am sure she is in no hurry to leave her home."

"No indeed papa, was Meta's reply; I am quite contented with this part of your decision." Whether she was contented with the other part, her father did not inquire.

When it was all settled, and Dr. Newton received as Meta's intended husband, Mr. Maxwell seemed to get over any repugnance he had at first shown to the match, no doubt congratulating himself, that he had managed well with regard to the conditions on which the former was so received; for he he had secured a good and wealthy marriage for his favorite daughter, while at the same time, he needed not to look forward to the coming separation as an immediate trial, and had also, as he supposed, circumvented his future son-in-law, in the designs he no doubt entertained; viz. to get Meta committed to a step, which her father doubted not, when her judgment should be matured, and her present enthusiasm for Philip evaporated, she should regret, and become ashamed of.

Some time previous to this, Dr. King, who was rather a changeable man, and was beginning to get tired of his present charge, who were also becoming rather tired of him, suddenly sent in his resignation to the officers of the church, which they with the rest of the congregation were only too willing to accept, and the result was, very much to his father's delight, a call to Frank Carstairs, with whom all had been delighted on the Sunday when he preached in W——, to undertake the vacant office. Shortly after Meta's engagement, Mr. Carstairs himself brought us word (received privately) of his son's intended acceptance of the pastorate offered to him, brought about mainly by his own persuasion, and some time after followed the public announcement, that the call had been accepted, as also the fact that the new minister was expected to enter on his duties towards the close of the month.

When the Sunday arrived on which he was expected to preach his first sermon as minister of the congregation, our household were more than usually anxious to attend divine service, and Meta especially, could not conceal her impatience for the hour when it should be time to set out. Instead of Philip's usual call the previous evening, she had received a note from him, informing her that in consequence of the unexpected arrival of a friend from America, he could not have the happiness of seeing her that evening, but would see her on the following day, when he would "tell her all about it."

Meta was very much interested in Frank Carstairs as the instrument of her conversion, and had been looking forward with the greatest pleasure to seeing and hearing him again, but to day her mind was distracted by the very natural curiosity she felt with regard to the friend (gender unknown) who had

so abruptly arrived at Philip's house ; and when we reached the church, and got seated, her first look was towards the pew where the Newton's generally sat alone, but where there sat to-day a noble looking man of middle age, who, when the service presently began, found the place and looked on the same book with Miss Newton, as if he had been accustomed to familiar intercourse with her all his life.

And what mysterious influence had he exercised over our quiet friend ? Whence the flush in the cheek, the sparkle in the eye, which we had never seen there before ? What was the man to either of them, that they should be so pleased to have him with them, for Philip too was excited (though he did not show it so much as did his sister), and once or twice looked to Meta with a smile of mingled happiness and raillery, which let us know he guessed the curiosity, which we could not conceal but had no means of satisfying.

Just as we were stepping into the carriage, for it was raining and we were all to drive home, Philip came up, and pressing Meta's little hand in his own, said to her mother, " May I bring up my friend this evening, Mrs. Maxwell, and introduce him to you ? "

" Certainly, Philip ; bring Miss Newton also, and come to dinner."

" Thank you, you are very kind : I will be most happy to do so ;" and the carriage drove off, and Meta and I had still to wait for several hours before we could learn the secret of the new arrival.

CHAPTER IX.

Great was our surprise that evening when Philip and his friend made their appearance (Miss Newton was not with them) at the tidings which they had come to communicate.

George Hunter, for that was the name of the gentleman who was partaking of Dr. Newton's hospitality, had years ago, become engaged to Clara Newton; but as time went on, and family circumstances precluded the possibility of their being able to marry, Clara insisted, for Mr. Hunter's sake, that the engagement should be broken off. The latter was very indignant, at what he called Clara's indifference, and they parted in anger. The gentleman immediately removed to a distance from the place where the Newton's were located, and all communication ceased between the former lovers; but George Hunter remained a bachelor for Clara's sake, and having learned by accident, very recently, that it was now not an impossible thing, that still they might be united, had at great loss and inconvenience, entrusted his business to a manager, and crossed the Atlantic, that once more in person, he might ask Clara to seal the vows, which had been exchanged in early youth, and return with him as his wife, to what was in reality her native country. Clara would still have sacrificed her happiness for the sake of her only beloved brother, could she have insured *his* happiness by so doing; but Philip now possessed a nearer and a dearer love, even than her own, devoted and unselfish though it had proved, could ever be, so with some-

thing of the joy and anticipation which she had experienced, when first George Hunter had asked for her regard, she accepted the happiness so long delayed, and as time was very precious to him, and his immediate return not only advisable, but needful, put aside the maiden bashfulness, which at such a time would have been both foolish and ungrateful, and consented that in two days she should become his wife.

Such was the substance of what Philip told us ; and with this both Meta and I, though curious to know more, had to be content. What the family circumstances were, which had parted his sister and her affianced husband, Philip did not say, but coming quietly afterwards to where Meta was sitting, not far from me, said, " Meta, my darling, I know you want to know more than I have told you, and guess, from the fact that I do not explain them, that these family circumstances, to which I have alluded, are not such as can be recalled with pleasure. Bear with me then, my own darling, for a little while, and when we indeed become one in heart and life, all the secrets, which now I would rather not allude to, shall become yours. Here is a note from Clara, she wants you once more to don your bridesmaid's garments, and officiate for her as you did for Sylvia."

Meta showed to me afterwards the note she had received, and its contents revealed to us more of Clara Newton's character and feelings, than all our personal intercourse with her had effected. It ran as follows :

" DEAREST META :—I know you rejoice with me in the happiness which has come to me, a happiness which I never expected to enjoy in this world. Years ago, I voluntarily gave up the thought of ever being united to him, whom I learned

to love when very young, and towards whom my affection has never wavered, through all the years that have passed since then ; but God, in his merciful goodness, has once more aroused me with the assurance of his love, and with the greatest joy and confidence I have consented to become his wife. Are you shocked, dear Meta, because I am willing to do this, without the time or preparation which is generally considered necessary, or can you understand, that to me, after the trials of the past years, it would seem almost sinful to trifle with my happiness, for such considerations ; and not only my privilege, but duty, to reward the constant affection, of which I have been the blessed recipient.

But I need not ask this, my own sister, (for my sister I hope you soon will be), I feel that you sympathize with me, both in the joy of being united to one I have loved so long, and in the sorrow of parting with the brother, who is not less dear on this account. To your watchful love I commit him, feeling confident, that with you as his wife, his happiness is secure. It proves, dearest Meta, how much I love and trust you, that I can thus, with strongest confidence, entrust to you the earthly happiness of one with whom my life has been linked in sorrow as well as joy, and whose happiness is dearer to me than my own life.

Philip has told you, by the time you read this, how soon I am to become a wife ; will you, dear Meta, act for me as you did for Sylvia, and be my bridesmaid ? The next time you attend a wedding, may you be the one whose happiness, with that of my beloved brother, shall be made complete. I earnestly trust Mr. Maxwell may be induced to shorten the time of his probation, for how lonely will he be until he can claim you. I trust you will come to see me to-morrow, and on Tuesday evening, we will expect the family, including Miss Maitland, to witness the simple ceremony which shall then take place.

Dear Meta I cannot write more ; come to me to-morrow for our last talk ; and God bless you abundantly, is the fervent prayer of your loving trusting sister,

What a wedding was that, which we witnessed two days afterwards. Barren of all the show and finery which had made Sylvia's so magnificent ; but full of the love and trust and joy, which alone can constitute a true marriage. My heart warmed to the quiet and gentle bride, as it never did before. I felt that she was a woman whom her husband would delight to honor, in whom his heart might safely trust. What the bridegroom was could best be told in the fact that such a woman loved him. How sorry I felt, to think that such an one, whose companionship was both an honor and a privilege, had been among us and we knew it not. In my heart I had voted this loving, trusting, self-sacrificing woman, commonplace ; and because, to my eighteen summers, her twenty-eight years seemed a very advanced age, had also privately applied to her the sobriquet of old-maid.

What near-sighted creatures we are ; for how often do we bow down to fancied merit, which, if we knew it, is but arrogance and self-conceit : and pass by with indifference, those in whose companionship we might truly have been said to entertain angels unawares.

Almost immediately after the ceremony, which was performed by Frank Carstairs, whose family, with our own, were the only invited guests, the newly married pair left for Liverpool, where Philip was to join them towards the close of the week, and whence they were to sail on the following Saturday for America.

On Philip's return, he supplied himself with a housekeeper, and settled down for a time to bachelor life. He was oftener now at Maxwell even than of yore, for Mrs. Maxwell felt it incumbent on her to make time pass as pleasantly for him as

possible, and Mr. Maxwell had some remorse of conscience for not acceding to the request, which Philip had made shortly after his sister's marriage, that Meta might be permitted to become his wife earlier than had at first been intended.

Mr. Maxwell was often tempted to yield, for he was becoming very fond of his future son-in-law ; and so long as they managed to keep clear on the one subject of moment, on which they differed, really enjoyed his society. But sometimes this *bête noir* of Mr. Maxwell's would become the subject of conversation, if not with himself, among those in whose company he might be, and as Philip, though careful as far as possible not to offend one, whose good opinion he was most anxious to retain, never condescended to shirk the manly declaration of the principles which were dear to his heart, as a means of benefiting mankind, and clear to his judgment, as the principles of truth, some degree of irritation would at times recur on Mr. Maxwell's part, and to some extent destroy the comfortable intercourse, which for the most part was common between them.

But the months sped on in quiet happiness for Meta, and, so far as physical comfort and social intercourse were concerned, in increased content for me ; for now I was not only the governess, whom my pupils loved and respected (for their conduct assured me I had succeeded in gaining both their love and respect), but I had also become more a companion than dependent to the rest of the family.

Fired by Meta's example, I had sought faithfully to perform the duties of my position, and had earned my reward, in the commendation and approval of those in whose service I was employed.

But though rejoicing in the added benignity of my lot, there was a worm gnawing at my heart, which robbed me of the peace in which alone true happiness can rest ; and in vain I asked myself, why *I* could not become possessed of the faith, which Meta had exercised so readily, and enjoy the happiness, which no one who looked on her face, or witnessed her daily life, could doubt that *she* possessed.

Frank Carstair's sermons, earnest in their simplicity, and searching in their candour, were a weekly torture to me, and sometimes I was tempted to wish for one of the prosy essays, with which old Dr. King had been wont to regale our ears, and under which we might sit in comfort, nor be troubled by the convictions which Frank Carstair's awakened.

Then again I asked myself, "Why should I be troubled thus? Others around me seemed to get on very well without this religion, in the possession of which he laid so much emphasis, and to all appearance be perfectly contented and happy ; why cannot I be the same?"

Dr. Newton had brought me light in many a difficulty since first I knew him, and his it was to illumine my mind on this most important of all subjects.

"Dear Miss Maitland," he said one night, "Meta tells me you are unhappy ; I wish I could help you. How is it you cannot exercise the simple faith, which will make salvation yours, and bring you the peace of which you are so much in need? What are you waiting for?"

"I am waiting for my heart to become soft. It is as hard as a stone at present, and I don't feel that I love Christ at all, although I know that I ought to love him."

"Supposing, dear Miss Maitland, that you were exposed to

some dreadful danger, and I said I would deliver you from it, because I loved you, would you refuse, because you did not love me in return, or would you be thankful to accept my deliverance in the first place, and then learn to love me afterwards, because, having so testified my love for you, and brought you the peace of salvation and safety, you could not help yourself?"

"I think were the danger imminent I should be glad of the deliverance you offered, even did I not love you."

"Why then do you treat Christ differently? His love and his salvation is mightier than any I could offer. With me there might be a danger, that when you knew me better, you might discover flaws in my character which should prevent you being able to love me; but with Christ, there is no such danger; he is altogether lovely and loveable, and the more you know of him, the more you will love him. It is Christ's love to you, and not yours to him, in which you must rest."

It was like a revelation. In that moment I consciously accepted Christ as my Saviour, and even in the act, I felt love to him already springing up in my heart. For months past I had been utterly discouraged, because I could not teach myself to love the Saviour, who had so loved me, that he gave his life for me; but in one moment, I had grasped the thought, that it was not I, but Christ himself, who could teach me to love him. My heart flowed over with gratitude, first to Christ, for the great love wherewith he had loved me, and the salvation he had wrought out for me; and next to the kind friend who had been the means of leading me to trust to his deliverance. When I woke from the thoughts, which were crowding upon me, I found that Philip had gone. Had he guessed how his

simple words had helped and comforted me, had at last noticed my abstraction, or he would have come to bid me good-night. I wished so much I had said one word of thanks before he left ; but I would have an opportunity on the morrow to thank him in words, and hoped that some day I should have an opportunity of tendering more substantial service for all his unaffected kindness towards me. I had that opportunity in after days, was it better or worse for him that I should have had it ?

CHAPTER X.

It was the eve of Meta's wedding-day, for the months had sped away, and Philip's patience and devotion were now very near their reward. It was exactly a year from that evening, that Meta had come to my room, and whispered the secret, the influence of which had colored all her life during the past year ; and coupled with another influence, mightier still, had lent a simple dignity to the girlish manner, which had then characterized her, a dignity which possessed no savor of pride, but rather told of a heart which was too humble for emulation, and too content with the happiness it possessed, to covet aught that belonged to another.

No one who had loved Meta in intimate companionship as I had done, during the twelve months of her engagement, could doubt for a moment her perfect contentment in the future which lay before her. She loved Philip Newton, with a whole-souled and entire devotion, which was only equalled by the love he bore his betrothed wife ; and sometimes my heart would whisper to itself, when I thought of their present and future happiness, in and with each other, "If I ever marry, may it be one whom I can respect, as Meta does her future husband ; and may I enter on my new life with the same well-placed confidence, which will make her wedding-day such an one of peace and restful happiness."

But Meta had seemed somewhat troubled during the last few days of her girlish freedom, and I had wondered, is it

always so ? and was Meta, blessed though her fate might be, not to be exempted from the tremours which accompany this most important and decisive step, which can never be retraced, be it for better or for worse. Such were the thoughts which occupied my mind, as I was about to retire, when a gentle knock came to my bed-room door, and Meta entered in her dressing-gown, saying, "Nora, I cannot go to sleep till I have a little talk with you ; there is something troubling me, and I want your advice."

It was the first time Meta had asked me to advise her, for though but a few months my junior, and in some things the most self-distrustful of the two, hers it had always been hitherto to counsel, and mine to follow ; what could it be now in which my advice was required ?

"Well, darling, what is it ?" I asked, smilingly ; "I feel quite flattered that you should wish to consult me."

"Do not smile, Nora dear, for it is something which you may think trifling perhaps, (I do not know whether it is so or not), but it causes me uneasiness. It is a something, of which I have never had courage to speak to Philip, and which I have an infinite distaste to speak of now to you ; but I cannot be happy till you tell me what you think of the thing itself, and whether you think I ought to mention it before my marriage."

A strange creeping sensation came over me at Meta's words ; what could it be, of which she spoke in such mysterious terms ?

"Tell me, darling," was all I could say.

"You remember, Nora, how when you came I was absent on a visit to mamma's mother and sisters, brought about by my taking scarlet fever, and having to be sent from home for fear of infection."

"Yes."

"Well, while recovering from the attack, I was very weak, and was ordered very nourishing diet, and a glass of wine twice a day, in order that I might regain strength. The doctor said I absolutely required it."

"Well?"

"Well I got so fond of my wine, I used to long for the periods at which it was administered; and sometimes (don't despise me, Nora) got aunties to give me more than was ordered, which they were quite willing to do, saying that in my weak state I required it, and it would do me good."

"Is this all, dear Meta?"

"Not quite: for, Nora, I often used to feel giddy after it; indeed I never have taken a glass of wine at any time without being slightly so affected by it, but then I never at home took more than one glass of wine at dinner, and sometimes not that, while at aunties, as I have told you, I not only sometimes had three glasses in the day, but I longed for it, as I never did before my illness. Since Philip has told us what a deceitful and insidious enemy this is, I have loathed the thought of ever having regarded it as a friend, and wished, oh! so much, that I had never so looked upon it. I am afraid, dear Nora, if I had not met Philip when I did, I might through time have become what I hate even to name. I believe that I am one of those over whom this influence might soon obtain the mastery, and that total abstinence is my only safety."

"Dearest Meta, my own darling," I exclaimed, in an impulse of untold tenderness, "your sensitive conscience exaggerated this, and your feelings are a little over-wrought to-night, in view of to-morrow. I cannot believe you were ever in such danger as you fear, and at any rate it is past. Having resolv-

ed to touch not, taste not, handle not, the accursed thing ; and with Philip as your guide and husband, your safety is secure. Banish such thoughts, my own darling ; how happy you ought to be with such a husband !”

“ I am so happy, dearest Nora, it almost makes me tremble, and yet I know this is sinful Let me rather accept my happiness as the gift of a loving God, not fear some trouble in store, because my cup is so full. But tell me now, if I ought to mention what I have told you to Philip. ’

After a moment's thought, I replied, “ I do not think there is any necessity for your doing so. Remember that Dr. Newton knows quite well that you were in the habit of taking wine before he knew you, and from his knowledge of it, could judge, if he has ever thought of it in connection with you, what its effects would probably be ; but he also knows your changed principles, and I believe, though he were acquainted with all you have now told me, would wed you to morrow with as much confidence as if you had never tasted wine in your life. Your father will not permit you at present to proclaim these principles to the world, but you can adhere to them all the same, and as you have done already, by example if not precept, aid your husband in the great life work which he has chosen.”

Meta went away greatly comforted ; and when she met the family on the following morning there was no trace of last night's anxiety to mar the peace which rested on her open brow, or destroy the calm assurance with which in the afternoon she bade adieu to her sweet and guileless girlhood, and entered on her happy lot as Philip's wife, which I doubted not would be equally pure and well-fulfilled.

But Meta's wedding was not all sunshine. The day which

brought her so much happiness, must methinks have come to her elder sister with mingled joy and sorrow, for on the morning of the day when Meta became a wife, Sylvia became a mother, and the tidings that a son had been born to the house of Carstairs, was brought to us by Percy himself, on his arrival for the wedding.

The same night the happy (?) father honored his son's arrival, and his sister-in-law's marriage, by leaving his father-in-law's house, and returning to his own in a state of intoxication.

I had heard it whispered once or twice that Percy Carstairs, since his marriage, had not changed for the better, and that both the younger brothers were too often to be seen under the influence of drink ; but that Sylvia's husband had descended to such a level as this, I could not have believed, had I not been an eye-witness of his degradation. What a monster drink had surely made of him when, he could permit himself on this day, of all days, to indulge in what he knew would send him home to his wife in such a condition.

No wonder now, that Sylvia also had changed, that lines of care had traced themselves on the smooth forehead, and a look of something akin to dread, stamped itself in the clear and beautiful eyes, which had never known what tears of anguish were. The only wonder was, that she could live and suffer so. How I pitied her ; how I lamented the day she had become the wife of such a man. But what availed my regrets ? Her fate was sealed as the wife of a drunken man. She had taken him for better or for worse ; how could she or I have ever suspected what the worse might mean ?

On the morning following the wedding, Mr. Maxwell appeared at breakfast, apparently in any thing but a contented frame

of mind ; and scarcely condescended, as he ate, to address a word either to his wife or myself.

After sundry questioning glances towards her husband, Mrs. Maxwell ventured to inquire, mildly, if he were not feeling well.

"Well enough," was the short reply, "but I am provoked at Percy, making a fool of himself last night. It looks very bad, in the circumstances especially, and I am quite ashamed of him. It is this kind of thing that gives these teetotalers a hold ; if these young fellows only had the sense to drink in moderation, as I have done all my life, total abstinence would never be heard of. I am thankful Philip had gone before he got very bad ; but of course he will hear of it, and what a feather in his cap it will be."

I could scarcely refrain from a retort, but Mrs. Maxwell was too just to let this pass. "Philip is too noble James, and too much in earnest, about abstinence, to rejoice at Percys' disgracing himself ; and I believe, will be deeply grieved, both for his own and Sylvia's sake, that he has formed such bad habits. I think it is your duty, as Sylvia's father, to remonstrate with Percy on this subject. If he does not respect himself, he ought to be made to respect his wife's family."

"I hate most mortally to speak to a man about such a thing ; but I suppose it must be done. If once I begin, it will be no mild language I will make use of, I can tell you. I never felt so indignant in my life."

Two month's later I learned, through Philip, that shortly after Meta's marriage, Mr. Maxwell had spoken to his son-in-law in no measured terms, on the disgrace he was bringing on his home and family ; but Percy could not be brought even to

promise amendment. "Mr Maxwell," he had retorted, when that gentleman had given full vent to his outraged feelings, "I may be doing all you say, in fact I know I am, and in doing so will probably ere long compass my own destruction ; but *you* are not the man, and this is not the time, to raise a warning finger. Why did not my father and yourself warn us lads long ago, when it might have been of some avail ; how was I to know that what *you* can use in moderation, and enjoy without injury, would become for me a tyrant, I find myself powerless to overcome ; but who is mastering me to my destruction. As for Silvia, I only wish I had had the courage not to marry her ; but I had a hope that she might help me to withstand temptation, and I loved her. It would be cruel to blame her, for the misery I have brought upon her, but she has *not* helped me. Be thankful you have married Meta to Philip Newton. With that man lies consistency. Had there been more like him, perhaps I had not been where I am to day."

Such were the words repeated by Percy to Philip, as the words he had used to his father-in-law, when Philip, as he often did, had been vainly endeavoring to awaken him to the possibility of amendment. "No, Philip," he added, "all your love and all your persuasion cannot save me ; you may despise me, you *must* despise me, but I can't help it. I know where this is leading me, but *I can't help it*. Would to God I had known you sooner, but now it is too late."

Percy turned on his heel, and left his friend, and bitter were the thoughts that passed through Philip's mind, as he wended his way home to his wife, with a sore heart for her sister's husband ; but he did not tell Meta what had transpired, and was transpiring, in the family. Why let her know the extent of Percy's wrong-doing, when she, like all the rest, was powerless to help him.

CHAPTER XI

I now began to ask myself the question, which every young Christian is certain sooner or later to regard as subject for consideration, viz., What is going to be my work for the Master, whose servant I have now become?

How was I, in my humble position and limited sphere of action, going to proclaim to those around, "what a dear Saviour I had found?" Since the great and momentous change, recorded in a previous chapter, I had endeavored, in one sense, to make all my daily occupations work for Christ; but what more was I going to do?

Sunday-school work seemed the most natural, and as I supposed, the only work of such a nature for which I was fitted. Meta, for several months, had rejoiced in a class of tall girls, many of whom towered above her in height, but yet looked up to their quiet and gentle mistress with the loving and admiring reverence which her sympathetic and kindly demeanor was well calculated to inspire.

Could not I also have a class? but of small girls, for my timidity, if not want of ability, prevented the wish for such an one as that described. Through Meta, I offered my services, but was informed, with regret, by the superintendent, that he had no class to give me, the staff of teachers being complete. Seeing my disappointment, Meta offered; as her class was large, to divide it with me, but this was a sacrifice I could not accept, for I knew that she had made herself intimately acquainted

with the circumstances of her scholars, and regarded with a particular and friendly interest every individual girl, and that it would be with very keen regret she would hand them over to another.

One evening, when I had been drinking tea with Philip and Meta, as I occasionally did on Saturday afternoons, the former, in a pause of conversation, as we were gathered around the fire after the tea things had been removed, exclaimed suddenly, "And so, Nora, (by mutual consent we now called each other by our christian names) you cannot get any work to do ; will you trust me to find you some ?"

"Certainly I will, if it is work for which I feel myself capable ; but remember there is not much for which I *am* capable."

"Leave me to judge of that. I think if once you are assured of its importance, you will enter heartily into the work I would assign you ; and now I will tell you what it is. You know I am trying to form a Band of Hope in W——, and I want you to assist me in gathering recruits, and also in the general management of our meetings, and other etcetras in connection with the society ; will you consent to help me in this way ?"

"Certainly, I will help you in any way you may point out ; but—but—," I hesitated and blushed at the thought of what I was going to say, even in the presence of these dear friends, whose sympathies were entirely on the side of what was nearest my own heart.

"But what, dear Nora ?" asked Philip, as I paused.

"I shall gladly help in what you ask me, but it is not exactly the work which I most earnestly desire. I would like to do some special work for the Master I now serve, which shall be the means of bringing others to know and serve him."

Philip's face was almost stern in its gravity as he replied, "For whom, dear Nora, am I asking you to work, and for what object?"

"When will Christian workers become alive to the importance of this enterprise in which I ask you to assist?" he continued with earnest enthusiasm. "How long will they continue to sow the seed among the briars and thistles, which make it impossible it can ever take root and grow? Why will they not, in this matter, act with the common sense and judgment, which the most ignorant farmer would display, in his endeavor to obtain the crop which shall be for the subsistence of himself and family, and realize how necessary is first the ploughing up and cleaning of the soil, in which they seek to sow the most precious of all seeds, which, if it do but take root therein, shall bring forth 'fruit unto perfection.'"

"Let me ask if the work of the ploughman, who prepares the ground for its reception, be not as necessary and honorable, as that of the man who follows with the germ to which, having provided it with the necessities for its development, we look for a plenteous harvest."

"Dear Nora, as you know I endeavor as you would wish to do, and as we have all more or less opportunity of doing, to sow the precious seed of the gospel of Christ in the hearts of those with whom I may come in contact; but my special life work is to hew down the rank weeds among which it is useless to waste the precious seed, and thus by first cleansing the hearts of those of my fellow-beings, who have given themselves heart and soul to the propagation of the mightiest curse of our nation, open up the soil for the reception of that gospel which shall make them not only pure in outward seeming, but 'clean

every whit.' I ask you, dear Nora, to help in this ; not only that you may be the means of bringing prosperity and happiness to poverty-stricken and ruined households, but that you may also be the means of leading many to accept the gospel, which shall insure not only their temporal peace and happiness, but their eternal welfare and felicity. Unless you can regard this as 'work for Christ,' I do not ask you to help me, though, in this matter, I should be glad of the assistance of any human being, who will lift a helping hand, whether from the lower motive of promoting human happiness, or the higher one of advancing Christ's work and kingdom ; but I feel, dear Nora, that you will be enabled so to regard it, and that you will enter heart and soul into this precious and honorable self-dedication."

The tears were in Meta's and my own eyes as Philip concluded ; every word he had uttered had called conviction to my heart, and revealed to me the inner workings of his own ; but I had not yet learned to discourse openly of what I felt most deeply, and I only said quietly, "Thank you, Philip ; please enroll me on your staff of 'preparers of the soil.' I will try to do what I can to help you, and sincerely trust that in so doing I shall be actuated by both motives to which you have referred."

The conversation glided into other channels, but Philip did not forget the work which he had promised to find me, and after this a considerable portion of my spare time was occupied in various ways, tending to the promotion of what Philip had designated his "life purpose."

One Saturday afternoon, when I was engaged in visiting one or two of the humbler streets in the town, for the purpose of

distributing the temperance tracts, with whose distribution Philip had entrusted me, I knocked at the door of a house whose outward appearance of cleanliness and respectability attracted my attention as I approached. A woman opened the door, whom for a moment I did not recognize, but at the familiar voice, as she admitted me, saying, "Oh, Miss Maitland, come in," I exclaimed, "Jane! is it really you? I did not know this was your house; but what is the matter? have you had an accident?" for her forehead was enveloped in a handkerchief, which fact had prevented me at first from recognizing her.

"Yes, Miss, I knocked my head yesterday; but it's not much, and will soon better. I am real glad to see you. How are they all at Maxwell, and Dr. Newton and dear Miss Meta?"

"They are all well; but, Jane, why is it so long since you came to see us? I have often thought of you, and wondered why you did not come to see the children, of whom you are so fond."

"I have got something to keep me at home now, Miss," and with matronly pride, Jane led the way to a neat little cot in a corner of the room, and exhibited her first-born son to my admiring eyes, for the child was an improved edition of his pretty mother, and in his clean habilaments and baby slumber, looked very lovely.

"What a pretty baby! Allow me, dear Jane, to congratulate you. I am sure you must be very happy with such a treasure."

"Indeed yes, Miss," she replied; but a sigh followed the words, and something in her face recalled her husband to my mind, and I asked, "How is James? I almost think you must have done better than I hoped, and persuaded him to become

a teetotaller. Everything looks so snug and comfortable, I feel sure you must be prospering, isn't it so?"

To my astonishment and distress, Jane, instead of replying, suddenly burst into tears, and sobbed as if her heart would break. All my attempts to soothe her were vain, and at length I had just to sit down, and wait till the storm had spent itself.

When at length she regained some composure, she seemed very much ashamed of her outburst, and tried to explain it away: "Do excuse me, dear Miss Maitland; this is a poor way to receive your first visit to my dwelling, but I have been very nervous since my baby was born. I felt quite excited on seeing you, and I think this upset me."

Jane dried her tears, and essayed a smile; and though I said to myself (as time for reflection while she had been endeavoring to recover herself had thrown light on one or two things), "I fear, Jane, that is two lies you have told since I entered the room," I affected to accept the exp'ation, and led the conversation to other subjects.

Soon Jane had apparently recovered her serenity and cheerfulness, but though, when I left her ten minutes later, her face was wreathed with its usual smiles of good-nature and friendliness, as she thanked me for my visit, and bade me good-bye, I could not banish from my mind the conviction, that they were assumed, and that Jane's happiness was a much more doubtful thing than I had first imagined, when her neat and tidy dwelling had impressed me with the belief in their prosperity, and led me to hope that she had been the means of compassing a reformation in her husband's principles and habits.

As I said before, I more than feared she had shielded her

husband from my censure, by untruths, but could scarcely find it in my heart to blame her. What a fearful thing it must be when a wife has to maintain her husband's honor, at the expense of truth.

I shrank from the question which nevertheless turned again and again to trouble me as I continued my way, "Can it be that *he* had any hand in Jane's *accident*?" and I would have given a good deal at that moment to be assured it had not been so.

"Philip, do you ever hear anything of your o'd coachman now," I asked, when opportunity occurred of relating my unexpected visit to the house of his former servant.

"Yes indeed ; I hear a great deal more than I would like to hear, Philip returned sadly. I have kept an eye on him ever since his marriage, and to all appearance that "bus" has been the ruin of him. There is so much temptation to constant tippling in such a position, that I am afraid poor James is in the way of becoming a confirmed drunkard. As it is, he often goes home to his wife, in a state of intoxication, and as, though when sober, he is as aimable and indulgent a husband as one can meet, when drunk, his tempter is furious, he has been known in his paroxysms of rage even to strike his helpless and devoted wife."

"Though a humble, she is also a noble woman ; and strains every nerve to make his home attractive ; and though these dreadful truths will come to light, in spite of the best efforts to conceal them, it has never been through her that her husband's conduct has been revealed."

Ah ! woman, when will you cease to suffer, and bury your happiness, in the tomb of your husband's degradation.

CHAPTER XII.

"Eleanor" asked Mrs. Maxwell rather abruptly as we were seated at work together one rainy Saturday afternoon, when the weather had made us more than usually dependent upon each other's society, "what question do you think was asked me yesterday?"

"I don't know, I am sure; if you tell me what it had reference to, I will try and guess?" "Well then it had reference to yourself."

"To me! I cannot imagine what it could be. I think you will have to tell me." "Must I?" "Then I was asked when you are going to the manse." As Mrs. Maxwell spoke she lifted her head from her work, and regarded me searchingly; and the hot blood mounted to my forehead, not so much at her words, as at the look which accompanied them and gave me the key to their import.

"What could they possibly mean?" I asked hypocritically "Of what interest can it be to anyone, when I go to the manse? but I suppose they meant with the subscription money for the Missionary Society."

Oh! no, I think they meant when were you going to stay," and Mrs. Maxwell gave a chuckle of suppressed amusement.

"I cannot pretend to misunderstand you now Mrs. Maxwell" I returned in distress "but what can possibly have given rise to such a question? It is dreadful to have one's name handled in such a manner. What will Mr. Carstairs thin',

when he learns, that such jokes are being made at his expense ; and what will he think of *me*. He will imagine of course, that I must in some way have occasioned them."

" I don't think he will imagine anything of the kind. Frank Carstairs is a sensible man, and knows quite well, that if a young gentleman pays his addresses to a young lady, somebody, is sure to find it out, and talk about it."

" But Mr. Carstairs has never paid his addresses to me."

" Has he not ? I have had good opportunity of judging, and I should say he has ; and though I shall be sorry to loose my little governess, added Mrs. Maxwell kindly, I do hope these addresses will be received as they deserve. And I think I have some ground for hope, she continued smiling, for when a young lady begins to worry herself about what a gentleman will think of her, I should say his case is far from desperate."

The reader will perceive from the foregoing dialogue, that the terms on which I now stood with Mrs. Maxwell, were somewhat different from what they had been when first I took up my abode in her house ; and I believe, this had been principally brought about by Philip's and Meta's friendship, which had ever stood me in good stead, since first I knew them.

But the lady had a very warm heart as I had discovered under her practical and managing exterior, and this concern in my future prospects, was not the first token she had given me of her regard.

I credited her now, with the best intentions in having revealed to me the fact, that Mr. Carstairs' more than occasional visits to Maxwell, had been subject for comment among her

acquaintances, who had been pleased to assign to them a motive, which I need not deny I had sometimes shrinkingly questioned with myself, whether they might possess ; but how I wished the preceding conversation could be blotted out, as a thing which had never occurred, for I felt confident, that now the consciousness that our names had been coupled together in such a manner, would destroy the pleasure in his society, which up to this date I had ever experienced, and feared that if the facts of such reports being abroad, should reach his ear it might so disgust him, as for ever to dispel the respect for myself, on which I believed the love of such a man could alone be based.

When I confess that such were the fears and feelings which actuated me at this time, I have revealed to the reader the secret, in which I would rather not enlarge except to say, that Frank Carstairs since first I met him, had fulfilled in all respects the lean-ideal of my girlish fancy ; had at first become to me a teacher ; then a helper ; afterwards a hero in all that is most excellent in the Christian character, whom it was my privilege to imitate and follow, next to Christ. Latterly, more than all this ; the one whom I felt I should be content to follow through life, not only as a Christian exemplar, but as the guide and protector of my temporal happiness, as well as the promoter of my spiritual well-being, and growth in grace.

But it so happened that just as my esteem and regard had reached their highest altitude, a circumstance occurred, which shook the one, though it did not destroy the other ; and I had to confess to myself, that my idol was but clay after all, and liable to sin and selfishness like other men.

It was Christmas day, and there was to be a family gathering

at "The Lindens' in honour thereof; a gathering which had never been neglected by Mr. Carstairs and his wife, since first their children had been capable of understanding the observance of the day, or partaking of the festivities attendant thereon.

Family circumstances were not so happy as they had been in former years, when the family had gathered around the festive board together; for the increased dissipation of his sons, was a source of keen anguish and humiliation to the genial old man, who in spite of his own example, had been powerless to keep them in the paths of moderation, in which he believed lay safety and self respect, but it would have broken his heart I believe, even to hint to himself, that either of them had sunk to so low a level, as to cease to appreciate and enjoy the privilege of family reunion and rejoicing, or to so insult, their indulgent Father and his assembled guests as to misconduct themselves at such a time. And thus it was that our Christmas dinner had to be cooked at Maxwell, since all the family including myself, Harry, and Arthur, were favored with invitations to the sumptuous banquet provided for us by Sylvia's liberal and kindly father-in-law; and great was the joy of my young pupils, that they had not been omitted in the general rejoicing.

We had all as requested arrived early at 'the Lindens,' and after an hour or two spent in various amusements, were towards the close of the afternoon assembled with the rest in the drawing-room, awaiting the announcement of dinner, when Frank Carstairs, whose attentions to myself, had during the afternoon, been more marked than usual, referred in conversation to some ornaments, which his Father had received that morning as a Christmas present from Philip Newton; and

perceiving as he spoke, that I knew nothing of them, "Have you not seen them Miss Maitland? Come to the library, and let me show them to you; they are well worth looking at, I assure you, and must have cost Philip something."

As we were looking at the bronze figures, which were really very handsome, Mr. Carstairs followed us into the room. "I say Frank," he half whispered, as he approached, "How do you think it would do to omit the usual toast-drinking to-day and have as little wine used at dinner as possible. I am grieved to see, that both Percy and Robert have been drinking already, and dread very much they may forget themselves, and take too much."

"My dear Father," exclaimed his son in astonishment, "you would surely never think of such a thing; it would not seem like Christmas at all; it is a sad thing indeed, if we cannot one day in the year, drink a bumper to each other's health and happiness, and especially to that of the Father and Mother, to whom we owe so much of both. Percy and Robert ought to be able to take care of themselves, and if they have not enough manliness to abstain from excess, our refraining from our usual custom, will do little good."

"But dear Frank," and the old man's voice trembled with emotion, "I am so anxious they should not disgrace themselves to day. If they do, I hope I may never have another Christmas on which to recall it. Help me my son, to protect your brothers, from contempt and ruin."

"My dear father, you forget, that how they may act to day, makes little difference. I much fear me, and it grieves me to the heart to say it, their habits are too deeply seated for such a trifle to affect them. But dearest father, it is neither your

fault nor mine. We have, and do set them I trust, an example of moderation in all things, and you do not know, how I have tried to influence them to return to it, but it has been vain. As to giving up our usual family custom, and one which has always afforded me, and I believe all of us, so much pleasure, I think it is utter nonsense. When we cease to mutually remember, and pledge each other, we may as well cease to meet together at all. It is certainly not the viands provided for which we assemble, but for the expression of the filial, brotherly, and friendly affection, which is thus encouraged and engendered."

With a murmured acquiescence, Mr. Carstairs left us, and his son, who seemed to be considerably excited, turned to me with the suspicion of a sneer on the lip on which I had never seen such before. "Methinks Philip Newton has almost made a convert of my father, to his absurd ideas on this subject; but pardon me Miss Maitland, and his manner altered, I forgot you also are 'one of them,' so I had better beware of what I say. I regret very much that we differ on this subject."

"You cannot regret it more than I do, I returned coldly, as I left the room, without waiting for him to accompany me."

It is needless to add, that before the evening closed, Percy and Robert, if not actually helpless, were in such a condition, that no right-thinking or pure-minded being, would wish to have anything to do with their society.

"I say Miss Maitland, whispered Harry, as we were whirling along in the carriage on our return to Maxwell, 'Wasn't uncle Percy drunk?' 'Yes darling,' I whispered in return, but do not speak of it. Your papa and mamma are very sorry, and so are his own poor father and mother." "Why then, did

they give him wine for dinner, and drink it along with him?" asked the boy.

A puzzling question for me to answer ; but I was saved a reply, for the carriage stopped as I was attempting to frame one, which should to some extent shield the parents, towards whom I was constantly seeking to inculcate respect and reverence in the hearts and conduct of my pupils, and yet open the boy's eyes, to the world wide inconsistency, which with the unprejudiced inquiry of childhood, he had already dimly comprehended.

A cloud had overshadowed the happiness I had lately enjoyed, for I could not forget that Frank Carstairs and myself had parted on the evening of Christmas day in coldness if not in anger ; and though I could not sincerely repent the words with which I had replied to the expression of his regret at our difference of opinion on a most momentous subject, I nevertheless tortured myself with the dread that instead of influencing him, (as I had hoped I should be able to influence him, some day, if ever we became more to each other than we were at present,) they would but serve to raise a barrier between us, which would only increase as time rolled on, and thus for ever render impossible of fulfilment, the sweet visions, in which I had of late to some extent indulged.

But as the days passed, and his visits and attentions continued as before, my mind changed, and relieved of the fear of losing his affection, which very naturally I had at first experienced I began to question with myself, whether since the revelations made in his father's library, of his feelings and intentions towards the temperance cause, and the cold-blooded selfishness, (for though clothed in feeling language, I could

call it by no other name,) with which he had rejected his father's appeal, on his brother's behalf, Frank Carstairs could ever be to me what he had been in time gone by, or whether I could ever link my fate with that of a man, whose pulpit precepts of Christian example and brotherly Samaritan-ship, and his daily practice of such virtues, in one respect at least, were so much at variance.

Though I had not yet been called upon to make the great decision, these feelings of uncertainty and doubt, brought a restlessness to my heart, and gave an uneasiness to my manner the latter of which I thought must puzzle my lover, as much as it annoyed myself.

But now events occurred, which to some extent caused my own affairs to lie in abeyance.

Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell and myself, were seated one evening in the drawing-room, in which I was now a welcome visitor, when I chose to avail myself of the privilege afforded me, when the sound of a carriage driving rapidly to the house, and a hurried ring at the door-bell, and subsequent entrance of some one, alarmed our nerves, and excited our fears of some painful occurrence.

Presently Philip entered the room unannounced, and his mother-in-law rose in anxiety. "Oh! Philip, there is something wrong. Meta!" She could say no more, but before Mr. Maxwell or I could utter a word. Philip set our fears at rest, by exclaiming, "Calm yourself dear mother, there is nothing wrong at home. I regret exceedingly I alarmed you so much; it was very thoughtless of me, but something unexpected has occurred, and I have not much time in which to tell you.

"My uncle Henry in America, is supposed to be dying, and I have just received an urgent telegram to hasten to him, as the Doctor says he may be spared for a week or two, and is very anxious to see me before he dies. It grieves me much to leave my wife for so long a time, but I cannot neglect such a request, and I know none of you would desire that I should do so. My uncle has ever been most kind," and his voice faltered, "and you are aware that he has made me heir to all he possesses."

"But my dear Philip, you cannot go to-night," exclaimed Mrs. Maxwell.

"Yes, I can catch the night train for Liverpool, and will be in time to take the Anchor Line steamer, which sails for New York to-morrow. Poor Meta, it is a very sudden leave-taking, but I want you to let Nora come with me to-night, and stay with her till my return. I could not leave her entirely alone."

"Certainly, Eleanor shall go ; but would not it be better for Meta to come here to-morrow, and remain with us while you are away."

"I think not," returned Philip meditatively ; "she would prefer I think being in her own home at present. Come dear Nora will you get ready at once, I have but an hour to spare for preparation, and leave-taking. Do not take time to pack anything ; I am sure Mrs. Maxwell will send you all you require to-morrow."

Half an hour later, I was in Meta's drawing-room, and Philip was up stairs, making his final preparations for departure.

Meta was trembling with excitement, at the sudden summons he had received and emotion in view of the parting

which must now take place, the first which had yet occurred between her husband and herself. As I tried my best to soothe and cheer her, Philip entered and I retired to a little distance, that they might take leave of each other. "Oh ! Philip," cried Meta in a kind of wail as she wistfully regarded her husband, "I do wish you were not going to leave me just now."

"Hush my darling," and he stooped and took her in his arms whispering "I will be back in time my own darling ; cheer up and do not fear."

There was a tender embrace, a tight hand-clasp, and he was gone ; and Meta threw herself on the lounge in an agony of emotion, with which I could entirely sympathize, but could not allay.

It was far on in the new day, before she was sufficiently composed to retire to rest, and it seemed to me as if I had but just sunk into an uneasy slumber, when I was awakened by a white figure at my bedside, and Meta's voice saying, "Rise Nora dear I am very ill. I think you had better rouse the coachman, and go for mamma."

"What is the matter dearest?" I asked in alarm, and but half-awake, as I sprang out of bed.

"I do not know ; but I would like mamma to be with me. Do not feel hurt, but I think you had better go home, and send mamma ; it all is well, you can return to-morrow."

Hastily summoning the chambermaid to remain with her mistress, and the coachman to get ready the carriage, I proceeded with my own toilet, and a wonderfully short time of space had elapsed, when my arrival at Maxwell was the means of disturbing the slumbering household, and sending Mrs. Maxwell in considerable alarm to the bedside of her daughter.

At day-light I received a note from the former, informing me that Meta continued very ill, and requesting me to take upon myself the duties of mistress of the house as her own return was impossible at present ; which towards evening, was followed by another, containing the intelligence that a little daughter had been born into the world, whose arrival had been neither expected nor desired, for some weeks to come, but whom nevertheless Meta welcomed, with all the joy and gratitude of new found motherhood

"Both doing well," was the bulletin which arrived at Maxwell on the following morning ; but towards the close of the day, there came a change for the worse, and Meta's life as well as that of the new born infant, hung in the balance.

Oh ! the agony of the two weeks which followed, during which neither her father nor I were permitted to approach her, and the fear that we should never see her again, haunted our waking and sleeping hours. During this time a tender chord of sympathy was established between my employer and myself which I am sure neither of us has ever wished to break but which, though we differ in many things, time has but helped to rivet into a fast and life-long friendship. We waited with ceaseless anxiety and I believe prayed with speechless earnestness, until the cloud rolled away, and we received the blessed assurance that not yet were we to part, with the beloved friend and daughter, whom to know was even with the casual stranger also to love, and who was therefore to the hearts of those who knew her best unspeakably dear.

"Dear Eleanor," wrote her mother at the close of the second week, "Meta is a great deal better, and the Doctor has good

hopes of her recovery ; but she is very weak, and must not see any one yet, as excitement might do her great harm. I wonder if the intelligence of her illness overtook Philip, and hope now it may not have done so ; but I have telegraphed to-day her partial recovery and earnestly trust it may closely follow the letter if it has been received. Poor fellow how cut up he will be. I fully expect his return by the first ship, and hope for Meta's sake I may not be disappointed.

CHAPTER XIV.

For two weeks longer during which I had only seen Meta twice, on each occasion but for a few minutes, Mrs. Maxwell continued at Dr. Newton's house in attendance on her daughter ; and I contrived as best I could, to fulfil her duties in addition to my own at Maxwell.

The time had dragged heavily away and I was longing for her return home, as well as that of Philip, from whom Mr. Maxwell had received a cable message, apprising him of his uncle's death, and his own almost immediate return to Scotland.

Though still very weak, Meta had continued to improve and though unable when her baby was a month old, to leave for any length of time, the lounge, to which she had been removed on rising from bed, was the Dr. said, favorably progressing towards the recovery of wonted health, the attainment of which was now merely a question of time ; and as Mrs. Maxwell was impatient to return to Maxwell, and her own home duties, it was decided that I should take her place as housekeeper and companion to Meta. at least until Philip's return, the nurse who had been with her from the first, still remaining in charge of sick room and nursery, and thus to my great relief freeing me from any sense of responsibility, with regard to the duties pertaining to either.

When I entered Meta's room on the day when this exchange had been effected, eager for the talk with her, for

which I had been longing for four weeks, I was somewhat disappointed to find that both she, and the tiny infant which rested on her arm, were asleep ; but touched by the picture before me, paused quietly on the threshold, as I regarded with mingled feelings of tenderness and wonder, the new strange picture of Meta's motherhood. How fragile looked both mother and child, and how completely was the one the miniature image of the other. My thoughts wandered to the happy husband and father, and with sympathetic anticipations, shared in some degree the joy, which must be his, when his eyes should also rest on what afforded me such strange emotions, and which must therefore surely thrill his being, with far stranger, sweeter, and to me impossible, experiences.

Stepping softly for fear of disturbing the sleepers, and exchanging a quiet good-morning with the presiding genius of the room, I passed through the bedroom into the dressing room behind where I thought I might find books or work, with which to occupy myself till Meta should awake.

Finding neither, and rather at a loss for employment, I began idly fingering and examining the things about the room ; among the rest a number of vials, which stood on a small table, whose labels were for the most part incomprehensible, but which, in an absent kind of way, I continued to read, for lack of more interesting occupation. At length I lifted a black bottle which stood beside them, and this time, read the label thereon both with intelligence and surprise.

The words which excited the latter were these, ' London Porter.' Nothing very remarkable to be sure ; but why this bottle in Meta's dressing-room ? Roused to curiosity, I lifted another of similar color and dimensions, "Port wine," were

the words, which this time stared me in the face, and sank me in wondering and painful thought. What could it mean? Presently I breathed a sigh of infinite relief, as I remembered what kind of stuff sick nurses are generally made of, and how necessary they are in the habit of considering these stimulants, to the exercise of their duties.

At this moment the woman of the character aforesaid entered the dressing-room, and I had an opportunity of venting some of the indignation, which had seized me more strongly than the circumstance seemed to warrant.

"Nurse," I said in polite, but reproving tones, "don't you think it would be advisable to keep your bottles in some other place. I am sure their odour must be offensive to Mrs. Newton."

"What bottles Miss?" she inquired looking at the table beside which I stood.

"This," I said, "and this; Mrs. Newton disapproves of their use, and I am sure would dislike that they should be here."

"These bottles Miss are for Mrs. Newton's own consumption; but I can take them from the room if you like."

The woman's answer was both quiet and respectful. Again I asked myself "what does it mean?" and seized with increasing anger I exclaimed hastily, "Who dared administer such things to Dr. Newton's wife?"

This time, my companion regarded me with amazement, and evidently, for the moment, entertained some doubts as to my sanity, but replied respectfully as before, "If you please Miss, they are given by the Doctor's orders, and with Mrs. Maxwell's approval."

"What Doctor?" I exclaimed wondering momentarily, if Dr. Newton could have advised the use of stimulents in present circumstances.

"The Doctor in attendance, Miss."

Becoming aware how absurd it was to say anything further to one, who was only acting under orders, and in no wise responsible for what she administered, on direction from the attendant physician, I tried to calm my indignation, and said quietly, "Oh ! very well ; I think I hear Mrs. Newton stirring."

Before following the nurse into the other room, I had to sit down for a few minutes, while I strove to overcome the astonishment, and I had almost said disgust with which I had learned of Meta's sudden lapse from the principles, which I had supposed were never to be laid aside under any circumstances ; but when I did approach the sofa, and held the blue veired hand in my own and kissed the thin cheek which rested on the pillow, my heart went out as of old to my girl friend, and I exclaimed in a rapture of affection, " Darling Meta, how good God has been to spare you to us."

"Yes Nora, and oh ! how good has he been, to give this treasure on my arm to Philip and me."

This was the introduction to a great old talk between us, the first since the arrival of Meta's treasure ; a talk full of wonderful anticipations of, and hopes and plans for, the future of the little stranger, who was now of course, the "dearest baby in the world," and would be in the future, ever the joy and comfort of its father's and mother's heart.

I cannot paint the ecstasy of Meta's face, as she looked at or talked of her child. *Then*, I scarcely understood it ; but what *mother*, worthy the name, has not felt this indescribable

joy, whose impress was thus perceptible in Meta's countenance.

By and bye the baby awoke, and gave a little cry of distress.

"Don't you want to take her Nora? Mind you must love her just as much as you love her mother; more if you like, but not less."

"I could not love her more," I returned warmly. "I wonder if it is possible I shall ever love her quite as much?"

"Of course it is, you shan't be able to help yourself."

I had tremblingly taken the baby and wondering if I should be able to acquit myself in anything of a creditable manner, as a nurse, seated myself in a low chair, and began sundry awkward attempts to get her in a comfortable position, my cheeks taking a rosier hue, as I fancied the nurse regarded me with some amusement.

The baby's head, when I moved her, flopped about in such an alarming manner, and her clothes kept getting so inextricably entwined around the infinitesimal form, to the covering of which their voluminous folds were considered necessary, that I was at my wit's end, how to deliver myself from so new, and trying a position.

As the baby continued crying, my distress increased, and at length the nurse came to the rescue. "I suppose you are not accustomed to babies, Miss," she said, with friendly amusement; "I hope you may get your hand well brought in by-and-by."

I most devoutly did *not* re-echo the sentiment, and there and then registered a mental vow, that however much I might *love*, I would for the present eschew, as much as possible, the painful pleasure of nursing Meta's baby.

Once more the little one had gone to sleep, under the nurse's soothing treatment, and we had resumed our interrupted conversation, gently reminded by the nurse from time to time, that she feared Mrs. Newton was talking too much ; when at length she left the room, and returned shortly, with a tray containing a most appetizing lunch for the invalid.

" Oh, here is your lunch !" I exclaimed, jumping up, " let me wait on you ;" and bringing a small table, I prepared to arrange the tray thereon, so that it could be easily reached from the sofa.

Presently the nurse brought in one of the bottles, which had raised such excitement in my breast, and placed it with a glass beside the other viands.

Though uncertain whether it were really necessary, in present circumstances, that Meta should occasionally partake of port wine for medicinal purposes, I could not bring myself to pour out the obnoxious liquid, and pretended not to observe that she had nothing to drink ; but presently Meta reached over, and herself poured out a glassful of her medicine, after which I observed she ate with better appetite.

" Nora dear," she said wistfully, when in spite of myself, and scarce knowing for what reason, a sinking quietness had fallen upon me, " I am afraid you do not like my having to drink this stuff, but you cannot regret it more than I do. I am more sorry than I can tell you that the doctor shou'd consider it necessary both for my own and baby's sake. '

Would Philip consider it necessary I wondered, and wondering, I wished again he were only at home ; then I should be sure that all was right, and could safely trust Meta, and all her concerns, into his strong and wise, and loving guardianship.

CHAPTER XIV.

It was the evening of Philip's arrival, and Meta, who had gone down stairs for the first time that she might welcome him home, was now with him in the drawing-room, while I as I sat up-stairs in Meta's room beside the sleeping babe, about whom no doubt much of their conversation treated, in imagination was a listener to the many "sweet nothings," as they are called which were being exchanged between the reunited husband and wife.

The nurse had also gone down to her early tea, so I was alone with the baby, and my own thoughts; but presently I expected the drawing-room door to open, and Philip and Meta to come up stairs. I felt sure they could not remain long contented, even with each other, while this precious charge of mine, had not yet been exhibited by the one, and made acquainted with by the other.

And now they were indeed coming, Philip's slow step, and Meta's soft laugh of amusement, telling me that the latter was being carried up stairs baby fashion, in her husband's arms.

As they entered the room however their merriment ceased, and it was with countenance full of emotion, that the youthful father and mother advanced together to look at their mutual treasure.

After shaking hands with Philip, and a few words of welcome home, I withdrew to a short distance, and turned away from them that they might feel themselves to be more alone.

After a pause so lengthened, that it excited my surprise, Meta drew a long breath, and whispered, "well Philip?"

Surprised still more at the sad cadence, so unexpected in Philip's tones as he replied softly, "well darling?" I turned quickly, though unintentionally, to perceive a look of pain in the countenance, in which Meta and I had expected to find nothing but joy. At the same moment Meta also looked up in her husband's face in surprise and disappointment. "Oh! Philip, surely you are not disappointed in her; I thought you would find her so lovely, and love her so much."

"My darling, do not for a moment think this; and forgive my quietness. Our darling is the loveliest baby I ever saw; and I cannot tell even you, how much I already love her."

Philip's voice faltered, but Meta's face was now dimpled with relief and joy. "I knew it must be so: oh! how happy I am." She clung to her husband for a moment, but the dressing-bell ringing, interrupted the scene, and afforded me an excuse for quitting the room.

Philip followed me as I retired, saying, "Forgive me, Nora dear; I am afraid in my haste to see my child, my greeting to yourself must have seemed a cold one."

"No indeed, Philip, you could not be cold even if you would. How content I am to come in third," I continued, smiling. "How rich you are, Philip, and how much I rejoice in your happiness."

"Thank you, Nora," and a look of pain followed the words, "I am indeed rich in such a wife."

"And *such* a daughter," I added, surprised at the omission.

"Yes, and *such* a daughter." The words were said slowly and thoughtfully.

"Philip, what is the matter?" I exclaimed, almost in alarm, something is clouding your happiness to-day ; what can it be?" "Your sister"— —, I stopped. His clear eyes now looked straight into my own. "Clara is well, and happy ; but Nora, there is sorrow in state for Meta and me. And precious babe will never grow up ; I feel sure of it. She is too lovely, too fragile for this world ; Oh ! that I could spare my darling this sorrow."

A sob choked the strong man's utterance ; but hastily controlling himself, he turned quickly, and re-entered the apartment we had left.

"It cannot be so ; it must not be so " I repeated to myself, again and again, when I had reached my own room, and compelled myself to begin dressing for dinner.

"Philip must be mistaken ; he is surprised at first at the baby's unusual loveliness, and thinks, that because of the circumstances of her birth, she is all the less likely to live ; but it need not be so ; Mrs. Maxwell says, that many children born prematurely grew up strong and hearty ; and I believe in this matter, she is more likely to know than a young man like Philip."

Somewhat reassured by such reflections, I descended to the dining room, in recovered cheerfulness, to find the others already there, Philip also in apparent cheerfulness and serenity.

The following morning, Philip at once resumed his professional duties, and things so far as he was concerned, bid fair to go on in the old accustomed groove, wherein they had moved previous to his sudden summons across the Atlantic.

"He was now a wealthy man, but that was to make no difference, so far as his profession was concerned. He loved

to work, and hated to be idle ; Meta would rather be the wife of a hard-working doctor, than that of even a wealthy hanger-on. They were agreed in this as in everything else, and could enjoy their money in added luxuries, and increased usefulness, without launching into idle extravagance ; and thus they meant to use, and to enjoy, Philip's inheritance.

Meta's duties however, were all changed, and what an endless source of occupation and interest, did she now possess. Much improved in health, she proposed to Philip, that the professional nurse should be dismissed, and a younger woman employed in that capacity ; but he, without assigning a reason, negatived this proposal, and Meta, though reluctant, consented for a time, to abide by his decision.

“ Previous to Philip's return, scarlet fever of rather a bad type had broken out in the town, and as Dr. Newton was highly valued in his medical capacity, as in many others, his absence from home at this time was more frequent and prolonged, than it had been since his marriage.

Much to our disappointment, he had not partaken of a meal with us, except breakfast, during the first two days ; but in the forenoon of the third we were rejoiced to hear his entrance in time for lunch.

We were all very cheerful as we sat down to table, and the painful incident which ensued, utterly unlooked for by any of us, caused a cloud to rest on more than one of the company. It so happened, that just as Philip was in the midst of an interesting recital with regard to some of the incidents of his absence in America, the table-maid, as was her custom, brought a bottle of port-wine, and drawing the cork, placed it by her mistress' plate.

It is impossible to depict the astonishment on Philip's countenance, as the latter began to fill the glass beside her. This gave place to almost livid emotion, as he inquired with forced composure, "Meta what is this?"

"Oh Philip" she returned blushing, "I have never had an opportunity of consulting you about this. I have been using port-wine on Dr. D——'s perscription, and mamma's urgent entreaty; principally for baby's sake. Have I done wrong?"

Without reply, Philip turned to the maid in waiting, "Who has charge of this poison?" he demanded, in sterner displeasure than I had ever imagined he could have manifested. "Mrs. B—— the nurse."

"Go at once and tell her, that I command her to empty out every drop of it, and break the bottles; and never let me see it, either in my house or on my table, again."

The maid left the room, and Meta,——I cannot describe the change in Meta; all her softness gone; pride, indignation and disdain, striving for the mastery in her usually gentle countenance, she stood looking at her husband, who as his eye fell upon her seemed to become aware of the insult he had put upon her, in the presence of a servant.

"Oh! my darling wife forgive me, forgive me" he almost wailed, completely broken down by the sight of his loving gentle wife, on whose face he had never yet seen a trace of anger against anyone much less himself, thus transformed "Pity me Meta, and forgive my harshness."

For a moment Meta stood perfectly still. I know not, but I can guess the dreadful struggle which was taking place in her heart. I know it not, but I firmly believe, that in that moment, she was recalling the solemn vows made to God and

her husband when she became a wife, and striving with herself and beseeching Heaven, for the victory over the emotions, which if indulged, would shatter her vows, and it might be destroy her married happiness for ever.

The struggle was over ; and very wan and weak after the storm, Meta crept round to her husband ; " Philip," was all she said, as she threw herself in his arms.

" How could I thus forget myself " wailed her husband, as he folded her in the strong arms which had never yet failed, which should surely never fail her.

The scene was too sacred for intrusion, and I quietly left the room ; my heart full of gratitude to God and admiration of my friends.

Surely nothing can ever come between these two for whatever comes to them, must but draw them closer to each other.

CHAPTER XV.

And so it was. It seemed as if the episode recorded at the close of my last chapter had but served to draw husband and wife closer together, and enhance the virtues of each in the eyes of the other.

Notwithstanding Philip's many absences, and the little share we enjoyed of his time and society, these were happy days which followed; but they were all too few, for my summons home to Maxwell came, and what had seemed but a brief bright holiday, instead of a change of labor, as was supposed, was ended.

Many were the thoughts which had occupied me during these days, relative to Philip's strange emotion on discovering how far his own views and principles had been set aside by Meta's physician and herself, thoughts of wonder, but not of blame; for I felt confident that there had been passages in Philip's life, unguessed at by either Meta or myself, which were probably the main-spring of all that was hard to be understood, in the incident referred to.

Besides this, the conversation with Meta in my own room, on the eve of her marriage day, almost forgotten until now, recurred to my memory, and strengthened my confidence in Philip's judgment and conduct. No doubt he understood his wife's constitution, and knew what was best for her; and some innate conviction of my own, born of I know not what, whispered to me that it *was* best as Philip had ordered it, that Meta

should touch not, taste not, that of which she had been persuaded to partake, in a time of bodily weakness, for, as was supposed, her own and her baby's health's sake.

And so I returned once more to my oft interrupted school-room duties, and Philip continued as busy as ever ; and in the midst of many bereavements to sad and stricken hearts and households, in consequence of the so frequently fatal malady, which had established itself in our midst, Meta's sorrow also came, and the fragile flower, which had blossomed in her home for such a little while, was plucked by the Master Reaper, and transplanted to a sunnier clime, where her loveliness should know no change, and her weakness could not follow her. Meta's sorrow ! oh, I cannot dwell on this. What sorrow is like unto that of a mother whose child "is not ?"

Meta was very quiet, very subdued, very gentle ; but the yet pale face grew paler still, the weak form still weaker, and Philip's and all our hearts were rent with anxiety on her account.

Man-like, and who shall blame him ? Philip sought a measure of forgetfulness, and a measure of acquiescence in the still arduous duties of his profession ; and it was well for him that he could obtain them thus ; but Meta,—her hands were empty, her heart was empty, her home was empty, where could she turn for relief ? forgetfulness for her, was impossible.

I cannot guess all the suffering of these dreadful weeks, but there is one who knows it all ; one to whom, I have no doubt Meta cried aloud in anguish of spirit, and besought him to assuage this fearful agony, which was tearing her girl-mother's heart to pieces. Will he forget her ? Can He cast off ? Nay ! but he may try her "as by fire."

But shall he not also bring her through "as gold purified ?" Time shall tell.

By and bye the fever scourge abated, the little ones at Maxwell untouched by the disease ; and Philip, more at leisure to observe his wife's rapidly failing health, began to devise many schemes for its recovery, among the rest a change of air and scene, but Meta clung to the nest from which her little one had flown, and could not be induced to leave it, even for a little while.

Philip knew that if he did but press his desire sufficiently, Meta, from a sense of duty, would force herself to consent ; but this he thought, would do no good, as long as in mind she clung so tenaciously to home, and so let the matter rest for a while, trusting that in time, she would herself perceive the necessity of rending herself from the grief which was consuming all her strength and acquiesce in his attempts for the improvement of both health and spirits.

Worse than all the rest, a cloud seemed to have come between the husband and wife, but lately so loving and devoted ; and a coldness gradually arose between them, which surely their mutual sorrow should have made impossible. Was I wrong then in my happy thought concerning them, that whatever should befall them could but serve to bind them nearer to each other, and was their grief rather to be the means of their estrangement ? The family evidently did not perceive that anything was amiss, in this respect ; but my loving, watchful eyes, were quick to note a change between those, whose happiness was so dear to me, and in much anxiety I pondered on the possible cause.

As Meta continued to manifest her old desire for my society, my visits to Dr. Newton's house were more frequent than those of any of the members of the family, who all trusted to me on

those occasions, to "cheer Meta up," a thing I tried very hard to do, but in which I had very little success.

These visits, however, Philip declared, never failed to render her more cheerful, and, as I was leaving one day, and he came to open the door for me, and thank me, as he always did if in the house, he surprised me not a little by the words, "Do you know, Nora, I have a scheme for keeping you with us altogether, and am coming to talk to Mrs. Maxwell about it, to-morrow."

Returning home in a flutter of excitement and curiosity, it needed all my self-control to settle myself to the afternoon tasks, and withdraw my mind from Philip's scheme. "Miss Eleanor, you are thinking an awful lot to-day," from Daisy, recalled me from a fit of absent-mindedness, and informed me how poorly I had succeeded in concealing my pre-occupation from my quick-witted little scholars. "I beg your pardon, Daisy dear," was my apology, as I attended to her request, so oft-repeated but unheard. "If you were governess I fear you should keep me in to-day for inattention, should you not?"

"No" said Daisy meditatively, "I think I would rather give you sums."

Sums were Daisy's particular aversion and often punishment, and we all laughed at the babyish desire for revenge, betrayed in her choice of punishment for myself.

"Well Daisy, sums let it be," I returned in amusement; but her fit of vengeful feeling had already evaporated, and her little dimpled arms were around my neck, and her baby voice whispering in my ear, "No Miss Eleanor," a kiss instead. "You are too good for sums; only naughty Daisy needs such horrid things."

How could I leave these children, and especially loving

comical Daisy, even for Meta's sake ; and yet if Philip and she really wished it so, I felt that I must consent.

The morrow brought Philip and his proposal, which was this : That Mr. Maxwell's two elder children should be sent to school, for which they were quite old enough, and that Daisy should for a time receive instruction in her simple tasks from the nurse, who possessed a good English education, and who, being unusually refined for one in her position, was perfectly well-fitted to take charge of her lessons, thus freeing me from my duties as governess at Maxwell, and enabling me to acquiesce in Philip's request, that I should take up my abode in his house, as companion to his wife, receiving double the salary to which I had hitherto been accustomed.

The scheme did not at first meet with Mr and Mrs. Maxwell's approval ; but when urged by Philip as necessary to the re-establishment of Meta's health and cheerfulness, at length consented ; and as my consent had already been given, contingent upon theirs, the matter was settled, and two weeks more saw the close of my life at Maxwell, and the beginning of a new one with those, whose interest and happiness were almost as dear to me as my own.

And all this time affairs remained *in statu quo* between Frank Carstairs and myself. Every Sunday I listened to his sermons ; every week came in contact with him in some way or other, but this was all.

I had no reason to suppose that his feelings towards me had in any way undergone a change ; on the contrary, time only strengthened my belief in his regard, but I was careful that he should have no opportunity of private conversations, and

systematically thwarted his endeavours to obtain more of my society.

My mind was in as great confusion as ever, as to what my answer should be, when the day of trial came, as I felt sure come it must ; but was determined to postpone it as long as possible, trusting that something might occur to show me the path of duty, and either strengthen me to self-denial, or encourage me to accept the happiness, I could not help but covet.

CHAPTER XVI.

After my departure from Maxwell, events continued to happen thick and fast in the united families of Maxwell and Carstairs.

Within one week, Sylvia left her husband's house, and sought the protection of her Father's, on account of her Percy's dissipated habits, and that husband's brother was brought home to the Lindens, in a state of insensibility, consequent on a fall while in a state of drunkenness, from a wagon, in which he and some boon companions had been returning from the horse races in an adjacent village.

From the effects of the fall Robert Carstairs never recovered and the unhappy father and mother of such a son had to stand by his bedside, and see him breathe his last, without one word of recognition of themselves, or repentance of the folly, which had cost him so dear.

All the family of course clothed themselves in sable garments and mourned his loss in orthodox fashion but no tear of regret witnessed to a life, which, while it lasted, had been unblest and unblest; and no word of affection was uttered for the lad, for whom the wine cup had proved too strong an enemy, and for whose degradation, those who helped him to it, by their superior strength, and moderate example, felt nothing but contempt.

Only the stricken father and mother, mourned as for one, whose death merited their keenest anguish, (as surely so it

did) ; and only the father and mother, laid to heart the solemn lesson, and learned, though too late, the mistakes of a lifetime's theories.

The preceding events, as might be expected, gained at this time for the families concerned, an unpleasant notoriety.

When Roberts untimely death had been partially forgotten, or become stale as subject for consideration, Sylvia's separation from her husband, still afforded matter for discussion and conjecture.

As for Percy he had never asked his wife's return ; but as through his own extravagance and dissipation, and his wife's ignorance of household management, his money affairs had become very seriously involved, at once vacated the house where their married life had been spent, surrendered the furniture and other effects to his creditors, and also returned to his father's roof.

Robert's sudden and melancholy death, had not failed to make a solemn impression on Percy's mind, and it seemed as if, impelled by this, and the tears and entreaties of his broken-hearted parents, he were about to abandon at length the youthful habits, which he knew full well bid fair to consign him also to an early grave.

For a time he confined himself as much as possible to home and avoided the society of those, whose good fellowship he was well aware could work his new resolutions naught but ill ; but alas ! the reformation was all too short, and sudden temptation, as quickly yielded to, seemed once more to seal his doom as a miserable drunkard.

The small measure of self-respect he had succeeded in regaining, forsook him entirely ; and recklessly casting aside the

strivings of conscience, the entreaties of parents, and the offered help and suggestions of Philip Newton, his best friend, he plunged again into insane indulgence, and resolved to drink, till he should die.

And during this time I devoted myself to Meta and the private studies, which with her and Philip's approval, I still continued. Encouraged also by them, I resolved to devote the greater part of my salary to music and singing lessons, in which I soon took great delight, and in which I also gave promise, my teacher assured me, of attaining no slight degree of excellence.

How happy I should have been, with so many resources of thankfulness and of enjoyment; an easy life, kind and considerate friends, a certain amount of outdoor usefulness, and last, but not least, these new and enthralling pursuits; but, —I was not happy. My heart was dissatisfied and restless. I wanted more than all this, and was weary of the uncertainty, as to what my future should be.

Robert Carstairs' death, fearful and full of horror as it was, had nevertheless, after the first shock, brought to me personally a ray of hope and expectation.

Surely *now*, Frank Carstairs would act in a manner worthy of him; surely now he would adopt the principles and practice in which my heart and judgment so firmly coincided, and which was the only thing wanting, to make us one in aim and in pursuit.

I looked for some wonderful transformation in his views, on this most interesting and vital question, but looked in vain. The man I could not help but love, though tempted sometimes to despise, went on his way, and made no sign: preached

as eloquently as ever ; sought by private conversation to commend the Gospel to those around him ; comforted his bereaved parents, as a dutiful son, and minister of Christ might be expected to do ; but continued as before a moderate drinker.

Sometimes I asked myself, "why do I vex myself about this?" True, Frank Carstairs is a moderate drinker. I cannot know but I feel confident he will never be anything worse ; why cannot I be content to trust him and be happy ? I believe his constitution is entirely different from that of his younger brothers and temptation will never come to him, as it has to them ; but after all, my stronger self would urge, *this* is not the question of importance. Can I respect and honour the man as a husband, who acts thus inconsistently, and contrary to New Testament principles as well as Old Testament exhortation ? *This* is the point with which I have to do. Reader, I could not answer yes ! I had not the courage to utter to myself a final no ! and so the question remained unanswered as before.

And meantime, some unaccountable change was taking place in Meta. Her health continued feeble, her spirits melancholy and dejected, but this was not the worst. It seemed as if her heart were day by day becoming more alienated from her husband ; and at length I could not but perceive the fact that she actually avoided him, which Philip evidently also noted, and for which in vain, he strove to find a reason.

Nothing could exceed his kindness, patience and devotion ; but all were in vain to win her from her coldness and reserve.

I am certain, that for a time, we shared the same fear, that her reason was becoming affected, though no word was uttered between us, in reference to herself, which Meta did not hear ;

but as time went on, and no other symptoms made their appearance, I put this fearful dread away, and continued to hope and pray, for her restoration to happiness, and the renewal of her unselfish love towards one, so worthy of it.

Often now in the morning she would lie in bed till Philip had gone out, pleading that she was "too tired to rise;" and as frequently retired to her room, on the same pretext, before his return in the evening.

What miserable evenings these were becoming, for a gloom was gradually settling down upon us, and I felt too sad at heart myself to cheer the misery away from Philip's brow, the lines on which were day by day becoming more severe.

To myself Meta was kind and affectionate as ever, and though shunning my society also, to some extent, was often melted even to tearful emotion, as she assured me of her love, and wistfully entreated my continued affection.

On several occasions she had given way to hysterical weeping, and besought me to help and counsel her; but whenever I inquired in what way I could do so, she as suddenly became composed, and retired into her usual reserve.

How it first came to me, I can scarcely tell; but, as if by intuition, more than anything else, a horrible suspicion had taken possession of my being. I could scarce at first name it to myself, much less breathe it to either of those it so nearly concerned; but as I watched, and waited, and weighed, and pondered, I became ere long convinced that Meta's secret was my own.

My eyes open at length to the miserable deceit, which this girl-wife was practising, from day to day, in her husband's home and presence, many things occurred daily, to strengthen my

conviction, that Meta was systematically yielding to a temptation, the strength of which I had no means of gauging, but the fact of whose existence filled me with horror and dismay.

What was to be done? This question troubled me by day and kept me awake at night. I could not eat, I could not sleep, and at length Philip noticed my altered look and manner, and kindly attempted to prescribe for me.

Quietly receiving the medicine prepared for me, I carried it to my own room, promising to take it as Philip directed ; but what could medicine do for such a disease as this? I felt that the miserable knowledge I possessed, and uncertainty as to what course I should adopt, in connection therewith, were consuming my very life away. Should I speak to Meta, and beseech her to abandon this secret habit, which was no doubt strengthening day by day, and would, at length, destroy her? or should I not rather carry the truth at once to Philip, who loved his young life so dearly, and who was even now mourning, far more than I could do, the unhappy change which had come upon her?

While I hesitated and trembled over the dreadful revelation I was called on to make, and alternately pitied and despised the weakness and the sin, of which I could never, never have dreamed my upright, pure hearted Meta, could possibly be guilty, a week had passed away, and still my task was unaccomplished.

During the last day or two, I had occasionally discovered Meta regarding me enquiringly, as if she also had perceived the change, which I could not conceal, and once or twice a frightened look had followed the glance, as if she dreaded it might be caused by discoveries concerning herself.

I resolved one morning that I should delay no longer, but that evening, if Meta retired early, unburden my soul to Philip, which at last I had decided on as the wiser course ; for surely there was no argument I could advance with the former, to win her from her unhappy position, which she herself had not already pondered, yet resisted.

It so happened at luncheon the same day, that Philip had several incidents to relate, connected with the Total Abstinence Society, which he had been the means of forming in the town ; and also some directions with regard to my share of the work, in which I still continued to help him.

As he continued to enlarge on Temperance in general, and many minor things connected therewith, in particular, I became so uncomfortably conscious of Meta's discomfort, and uneasiness, that I could stand it no longer. Aware that my cheeks were crimsoning and paling by turns, and that presently Philip, so observant, should be certain to inquire the cause, I quickly rose from the table, glanced at the time-piece, and murmuring that it was time for my music lesson, and excusing myself to Meta, hastily left the room.

Now I knew whatever Philip might think of my unusual behaviour, I had betrayed myself to Meta ; and she should now feel certain that her secret was in my possession.

Dreading what the result of this discovery might be, and fearing interrogation from Philip, for which I was at present too disturbed to be prepared, should they leave the dining-room before I had time to get away, I hurriedly donned my outdoor garments, and procuring my music, left the house.

My music lesson over, I dreaded to return, and meet Meta alone. If I could pass the time till dinner, when probably

Philip should be at home, and would possibly have forgotten all about my hurried leave-taking. it would be better. After dinner, Meta should probably retire to bed, and then must come that awful interview, which even in imagination, I could scarcely endure the thought of.

Acting on this programme I contrived in one way and another to pass the hours till dinner-time approached, and as I reached the house on my return, was relieved to find Philip just about to enter.

We both ascended to our rooms, to make some preparation for the meal, my heart throbbing with excitement at the thought of meeting Meta, and in anticipation of what must come to-night, and the possible consequences which might follow thereupon.

CHAPTER XVII.

My worst forebodings of that evening's experiences, could never have distantly approached what turned out to be reality.

Though I had been ready for some time to go down stairs, I had purposely delayed, until I heard Philip's door open, and his steps descend the staircase, and as I supposed enter the drawing-room. Wishing to meet Meta first under cover of his entrance, I quickly followed, to find that Philip had been detained in the hall, by a question from his coachman, which having replied to just as I reached the threshold, we entered the room together.

What was our surprise, to find Meta, whom we expected to see in dinner-dress as usual, crouched on the hearth rug, and still in her morning wrapper. She turned as we entered, and looked at us, but did not speak.

"My darling love," cried Philip approaching her, in anxiety 'are you ill?' She looked at him again. and I can never, never forget, the cold grasp at my heart, as I perceived the vacant look in the beautiful eyes, and heard the jarring laugh with which she replied to her husband's affectionate enquiry.

"Oh! no, I am not ill Philip; but what is the use dressing up. I can not hide my deformity, and so I'm not going to dress up any more. Nora knows the reason, don't you Nora?" and she laughed again, and then began to weep.

"Good God! it has come at last," cried Philip, staggering to a chair. "Oh! Nora this is what I have been dreading for

many weeks." Suddenly composing himself, he again approached his wife, and addressing her in the tenderest language, begged her to go and dress for his sake. "Nora will go with you ; come darling," and he tried to raise her, but she resisted his efforts, and continued weeping.

Ah ! I must not hesitate a moment longer ; this scene must be ended, and Meta conveyed to her room, before there was any chance of a servant entering, and discovering this domestic tragedy.

"Philip, Meta is not ill as you suppose," I whispered significantly ; "let me take her to her room, and do you go on with dinner. Say to the servants that Mrs. Newton is indisposed, and that I shall keep her company in her own room. Also that we will not require anything until later."

"Nora, what do you, what can you mean?" cried Philip almost indignantly, "I will myself carry my darling up-stairs, and do you if you like, sit down to dinner ; I do not wish any."

"But Philip," I continued in distress, utterly at a loss how to convey the dreadful truth to his still unawakened perception "It is better for me to go, oh ! Philip, don't you understand?"

He looked blankly at me, as if he feared my reason also were tottering on its throne ; and, in perplexity, again turned to his wife.

Something in the appearance and attitude revealed the truth. The strong man tottered backwards, and almost fell into a chair, his frame shaking with fearful emotion, as, burying his face in his hands, he exclaimed wildly, "Great God ! am I twice cursed ? Can this be the woman I have loved so tenderly?"

Meta, becoming aware of her husband's emotion, and seeming to have a dim perception of its cause, arose and tottered to him "Philip, darling! don't cry, I will dress for dinner if you like; what shall I wear—my blue barege or lilac silk? Tell me, Philip, and I will dress up very grand," and she laid her hand on his arm with a coaxing gesture; but with one look of horror and disgust, Philip threw her from him, and in maddened fury and despair, left the room, and the house, without one backward glance to see the result of what he had done.

In falling, Meta's forehead had come in contact with the sharp edge of an ottoman, which stood near, and was now bleeding profusely from a deep wound which it had inflicted. With an upward cry for wisdom, and strength, in this extremity, I raised the stunned and almost senseless girl, and partly guided, partly carried, her to her own room, which, having entered, I laid her on the lounge, and proceeded to bathe and bandage the hurt as best I could. Just as I had finished, the dinner-bell rang, and, determined to shield as much as possible the family circumstances from the prying curiosity or suspicion of the domestics, I descended to the dining room, and, as calmly as I could, breathed the first deliberate falsehood of which I could remember being guilty, viz., that Dr. Newton had been suddenly called away, and Mrs. Newton being indisposed, I intended to remain with her in her room, where we would take a cup of tea later in the evening.

It was nothing new for the Dr. to receive a summons, in answer to which even meals must be set aside; nor was there anything unusual in the fact of his wife's indisposition; consequently my announcement was received with perfect equanimity, and the dinner dishes forthwith removed, in accordance therewith.

Our secret was still our own, and thankful even for so small a boon, in heaviness of heart, and gloomy anticipations of worse evils to come, I once more ascended to my self-appointed guardianship, to find that Meta was still wrapt in the heavy slumber which had fallen upon her almost as soon as she assumed a reclining attitude.

Through the hours of the evening I sat by that couch and watched and waited for Philip's return ; but he came not, and the dreadful thought kept surging through my brain—what if he never returned again? What if he went away, and left his young wife, in all her helplessness and misfortune, to battle with this foe alone ; to yield step by step, as I foresaw she should, and at length be utterly conquered by the relentless enemy, who was even now dooming her fair young life to ignominy and disgrace?

Too stunned at first to pray, I could only wring my hands in anguish and terror, and hope that Meta would sleep on. Ah ! what should her awaking be to both of us ? I foresaw the despair, on which possibly, in spite of all my efforts to prevent it, fresh indulgence was sure to follow.

How I reproached myself for not having spoken to Philip a week ago, and then this could surely never have happened ; for I felt confident that Meta had never been before as we had seen her to night, and that that was but the result of the discovery, that I knew her secret, on which no doubt she had felt that even the measure of self-control which she had previously exercised, should be powerless to protect her from our contempt.

At eight o'clock the servant brought a tray to the door, which I took quietly from her, signalling that Mrs. Newton was asleep, but resolving to take some refreshment myself, to strengthen

me for the vigil which lay before me, and which I was determined to keep. lest Meta should awake, and I not be present to comfort, strengthen, or control, as might be necessary.

Hour after hour slowly passed in terrible loneliness and dread, and still Meta slept on, and Philip did not return. When four o'clock struck in the hall, and daylight began faintly to appear, I gave up all hope. Either he had gone away, resolved never to return, or worse still, had, in his despair, taken away his own life. What fearful events might not the coming morning bring to this accursed house ; but hark ! Philip's key in the door ; Philip's step (yet not Philip's, so slow and weak) on the stair ; presently his hand on the handle of the door, which softly turned, and once more we three were in the presence of each other.

One glance at Philip's haggard face told me the night of agony he had endured ; but something there also set my worst fears at rest, and I knew that Philip was himself again : strong and tender, faithful and true, forgiving, sympathizing, helpful ; what might not his noble qualities of heart and soul effect, even in this dire extremity which had come upon us ?

A glance at his wife, not this time full of loathing, but of tenderest pity, a quiver as he saw her bandaged forehead, a look into my own eyes, and a fervent "God bless you, Nora ; we will help and save her, you and I," and we sat down together, and waited for her waking."

When daylight streamed into the room Meta awoke, and her glance fell first upon her husband in surprised inquiry. Then the full awakening came, and she turned her face away in shame and terror. But now was Philip's time to reassure and comfort, not to harrass or reproach. "My precious wife, my own

darling Meta, do not turn away ; let me tell you how I love you ; how I mean to cherish you ; how, with God's blessing, I will help and save you. I never loved you, my wife, as I love you now ; I will never neglect you in the future as I have done in the past ; forgive me, Meta, that I have so failed in my duty towards you ; but, with God's help, I will never so fail again. Look up, my precious one, and tell me you forgive."

Something akin to worship filled my heart as I heard this noble self-condemnation, assumed in part (though I believe uttered also in self-depreciating sincerity) to save Meta as far as possible from the self-loathing and contempt from which he knew well she must keenly suffer.

Meta turned and looked in her husband's face, her own full of wonder and relief, "Oh, Philip," she cried, "Philip, my husband, help me, help me ! Oh, Philip, why do you not loathe me as I loathe myself ?" She half rose, and he caught her to his breast. "Do not say that Meta ; do not think it. You have been bodily and mentally in an unhinged condition, and I did not realize how much care and sympathy you required ; but remember, Meta, in the future you must lean on me, next to God ; you need human aid and support, as well as God's upholding mercy ; and in the future I beseech you keep nothing from me. Bring all your sorrows, all your weakness, all your temptations, to me, and we will do battle with them together. Do you promise ?"

"Oh, how gladly !" came from Meta's white lips, with a sigh of unutterable content ; "the very thought that you know the worst, and still love and have promised to help me, makes me strong. Philip, you do not know how I have suffered, and striven to resist."

"Yes I do know, Meta, or can at least guess. I know just what you are, darling, and all that has happened has not in the least altered my estimate of your character; and therefore I can guess what the woman, whom I esteem above every other, *must* have suffered, before such sorrow could have followed."

"And now, darling," he continued in a cheerful tone, "I am going to prescribe for you; first, a warm bath; next, a dainty little breakfast; afterwards, a drive with me, during which we will call at Maxwell, and tell them that we are about to leave home, as we have at length agreed that a few months' travel is the thing most likely to recruit your health; that we are going to take Nora with us, etc., etc. I am going in for a holiday, and we are all going to have a good time; and now I will leave you; Nora will kindly assist you with your toilet, and I will expect to see you both down-stairs when the breakfast-bell rings." So saying, and with a long and tender kiss on his wife's lips, Philip left the room.

Was this the morning of the night which had just passed? Surely it was; and though the battle still remained to be fought, and the victory to be won, with unutterable gratitude and relief, I thanked God, and took courage.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Nora, you do not despise my darling?" Philip was stooping over a trunk, which stood in the hall, and which he was engaged in cording, preparatory to our journey on the morrow. The words came with a wistful upward glance, as I stood by his side, and the deep brown eyes looked into my own with a pathetic entreaty in their depths, as he waited for my reply.

Meta had returned from her drive an hour ago, thoroughly tired out, and was now asleep up-stairs; and Philip and I were occupying ourselves until dinner-time with preparations for our departure.

I wanted to say so much in answer to his question, but the rush of emotion his sudden words occasioned (it was the first reference made between us to the events of two evenings previous), kept me silent, and he returned to his work with a sigh of bitter disappointment. A pause,—and then I stooped and whispered, "Philip, there is no feeling in my heart for Meta, but love and pity."

"I feared it might be only pity, or something worse," he said. "Tell me, Nora, do you really love her as of old?"

"I do indeed, Philip; do not ever doubt it."

"Then," said Philip, more cheerfully, "we can work together; and remember, Nora, I, who understand my wife's constitution thoroughly, can comprehend better than you can how all this has come about. And now I have something I want you to do before we leave home." The imperfect light

from the hall-window could not conceal the vivid blush which rose to Philip's cheeks as he continued, "It is evident that a previous order of mine, with reference to the stimulants got into the house during Meta's sickness, has, for some reason or other, been ignored or neglected. I would like you, while Meta and I are absent to-morrow morning at Maxwell, to search every corner of the house thoroughly, and as you think best, or find most convenient, destroy everything of the kind you may meet with. Will you do this?"

"Willingly."

"And now, before leaving home, I wish to warn you that our mutual endeavor must be to prevent Meta, if possible, coming in contact with such, even to see or smell them. I do not distrust my wife, but we must make her cure as easy for her as possible. Regard this, dear Nora, as a disease, for disease it is, and treat it accordingly. We must also mutually endeavor to keep her occupied and cheerful, and I believe that these resolutions, carefully carried out, with the change of air and scene, and the recovered strength which I have no doubt shall be consequent thereon, will restore her in time to all her wonted health and happiness. Poor Meta! much as we love her, Nora, I do not think that either of us has understood all the anguish she has suffered, from the death of our baby, and the consequent strength of the temptation, which has assailed her in this time of bodily weakness and heart-rending sorrow. Do not blame her too much for what has occurred, but blame the false kindness and ignorance which has made such a result possible. Many as young and fair have been led away to their own destruction by this demon, whom men and women will persist in hugging to their bosoms with

infatuated security. I can say this from a little experience, for, Nora, I will tell you the secret of my life : my mother was a confirmed drunkard ; I never knew her anything else ; but others have told me how fair she was, how loving to husband and children, and how much respected and beloved herself, before this fearful curse laid hold upon her. Clara's, and my own young days, are gloomy days to look back upon ; and the bitterness of their humiliation and grief will follow us to our graves. This it was which caused Clara to break her engagement to George Hunter, that she might share with my father and myself, the sad home, from which her lover would gladly have taken her. I thank God that he has given her back the happiness she was willing to sacrifice so nobly, and I believe he will also bless my new home, and restore the wife of my youth to all her former innocence and purity. Pray for us, dear Nora, and help us by your sympathy and friendship."

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It was the morning following the preceding conversation, and Philip and Meta had gone to pay their farewell visit at Maxwell ; while I, who had bidden them all good-bye yesterday, was busily occupied in the many little etcetras, which can only be attended to on the very eve of departure. I had faithfully performed Philip's behest, had discovered the source of Meta's temptation in a cupboard in the dressing-room, where doubtless the nurse had stowed the bottles, when Philip had commanded her to empty out the precious liquid they contained, and where she must probably have informed Mrs. Maxwell (to whom she considered herself for the time being responsible) they were to be found.

However it had happened, there they were, the preponder-

ance of those which were already emptied telling a tale I would fain not have been obliged to read.

This obnoxious task completed, and every preparation I could think of in readiness for our afternoon journey, I sat down, tired in body and spirit, to wait the return of Philip and Meta, and became lost in painful reverie, for even in the midst of much to make me thankful, there were also sad and painful thoughts, which would not be banished—thoughts of Philip's grief, of Meta's humiliation, and my own separation, it might be for months, from one in whom I did not now hesitate to confess to myself, my worldly happiness centered. But, after all, was not this separation the very thing which should help me to overcome the feelings with which he had inspired me, and give me courage to refuse, should it be offered to me, to share the destiny which, but for one thing, I should be but too willing to make my own. Then another "but," with which the reader knows I had struggled oftentimes before, came again to trouble me, and I asked myself, "Can it be that my thoughts are becoming morbid on this subject, and the expediency of this sacrifice, which I dared scarcely in imagination look at, be but the quixotic chimera of my own brain?" If so, still I could not help it, and the trying events of the past ten days had been anything but calculated to deaden my sensibilities with regard to what so much concerned my happiness.

A knock at the door interrupted my thoughts: "If you please, Miss Maitland, Mr. Carstairs is down stairs, and wishes to see you."

Notwithstanding my interrupted meditations, the name awakened no particular emotion; I knew that Frank Carstairs had been absent on Sunday, at a considerable distance, filling

the pulpit of a brother minister, and was not expected home till the end of the week. It could, therefore, only be his father, who had called to bid us good-bye, and with kindly thoughts in my heart for the genial, but sorely afflicted, old man, I descended just as I was, which was in considerable dishabille, the result of my morning's work, and, opening the drawing room door, stood in the presence of the very person I had convinced myself there was no danger of meeting.

In spite of my best endeavors I could not regain composure, and as Frank Carstairs advanced, and taking my hand, pressed it in his own with a tenderer clasp than he had ever before essayed, I blushed and trembled, and replied to his remarks in a wildly random manner, the consciousness of which covered me with increased confusion.

The fact that this unusual behaviour had brought a flush of pleasure to the countenance of my companion, and an additional warmth into the tones which were addressing me, did not tend to reassure me. I knew what was coming, and that even now my fate was trembling in the balance.

"Miss Eleanor, as you can guess, I have come to bid you good-bye. I was very much surprised when Philip wrote me of your sudden resolve to leave home, and hastened my return, that I might see you before you go. Nora, I *cannot* let you go away, without your promise to become my wife on your return. You know, as well as I can tell you, I believe, how much I love you; and also that I would have asked you this long ago, if only you would have permitted me. You have avoided me of late, and made me fear oftentimes that my suit must be obnoxious; but, Nora, tell me it is not so, but rather that the hopes which I have at other times presumptuously

indulged, that I am not utterly indifferent to you, have not been without foundation. You do not speak, and I scarcely know whether to fear or hope ; Nora, give me your answer ?”

Ah, how fain would I have given the reply my heart dictated, but something stronger even than the desire to snatch the happiness within my grasp held me back. “ Give me time to consider,” at length I faltered ; “ I do not know, I cannot tell,—

“ But, Nora, you leave home this afternoon, and will be gone probably for several months ; why will you not give me my answer now ? Forgive me, but I cannot help but think you have a measure of regard for me ; is it not so ?”

He approached closer, and seemed as if he were about to forestall my reply, by assuming it to be an affirmative.

Maiden bashfulness aided my but half formed resolution, and I drew back, saying stiffly, “ I hope you will forgive me, but I cannot accept the affection you offer ; and now, if you will excuse me, I will bid you good-bye, and hope you will believe that my grateful friendship shall always be yours, if you care to possess it.”

“ Will you not give me the reason for your decision ; you say you decline my affection, but you have not said you cannot return it. Tell me plainly that you feel for me only as a friend, and can never regard me in a nearer and dearer relationship, and I will go away, and never molest you again ; or, if you are really uncertain as to your sentiments, I will gladly give you time, and renew my suit, when, it may be, I shall have more chance of success.”

Unable to resist this manly and generous appeal, I faltered in my resolve, and in another moment might have yielded, but was saved by a carriage driving to the door, followed by Phil-

ip's voice in the hall, and his steps and Meta's coming towards the drawing-room.

"Here they are!" I exclaimed hurriedly, holding out my hand, "believe me, Mr. Carstairs, I am very grateful for the honor of your regard, but cannot alter the reply I have already given."

With flaming cheeks I passed Philip and Meta, as they entered, and in emotion, which I could not possibly control longer, ascended to my room, there to give way to an agony of regret for the happiness I had deliberately put from me, and yet knew not how I was to live without.

How easy I had thought it for Jane, the nurse, to give up her dearest desires, because wisdom pointed in another direction; but ah! me, how hard I found even the prospect of this bitter self-denial, which I was voluntarily taking with me, knowing not but I might thus be ruthlessly squandering the best gift heaven should ever send me, in needless yielding to a fancy, a fear, an instinct, which nevertheless I could not resist.

But even at first I must put my own grief away, and remember the task which lay before me, viz, to comfort and strengthen those who so much required and deserved my sisterly sympathy and assistance. The rest I tried to commit to Him, of whom I had often already sought help and guidance with regard to what lay nearest my heart, and whom I could not but believe would cause even this sorrow (self-chosen though it appeared) one of the "all things" which should "work together for good."

CHAPTER XIX.

Four months of absence, during which Meta had recovered health and cheerfulness, and Philip lost the careworn look which had often made my heart ache with unspoken sympathy, and called forth methinks deeper springs of tenderness in the heart of his wife, than ever she had known in the days when all things went well with her, and no trial had occurred to dim the brightness of an unclouded felicity.

A sweeter humility than ever characterized Meta's daily intercourse with us, knitting our hearts to hers with a purer, sweeter affection than we had known in the past, when we thought we loved her as much as it was possible to love below.

We did not forget the sad and painful secret which rested with "we three," and should never be breathed to any other ; but remembered it to give God thanks for the wonderful deliverance, of which he had permitted Philip and I to be the instruments.

For myself, the weeks and months of absence had passed more quickly than I had imagined it possible they should. Occupying myself with the studies, which, in our wanderings from place to place, I did not neglect ; in the occasional instructions, during more protracted stays in one locality, which Philip's generosity procured for me ; in the self-rewarding, though often non-successful efforts to put selfish regrets away, and care for the happiness of others, I attained a degree of cheerfulness and serenity which sometimes surprised me. I

had thought my life was to be blighted, and instead, it seemed as if God were sending me a special blessing, in increased confidence in his overruling providence, and content that his love should decide my lot, and his wisdom, greater than I could comprehend, "choose my inheritance for me."

Occasional letters from Maxwell, and a weekly epistle from Frank Carstairs to Philip, comprised our correspondence. The latter I recognized by the handwriting, but was never permitted to read; and from this fact alone I should have guessed, had I not for other reasons felt certain from the first, that Philip knew my secret, though no reference had ever been made to it either by Meta or himself.

His constant and increased kindness forbade the thought that there had been anything in my reception of Frank Carstairs' proposal which he disapproved or condemned; but sometimes the question would arise, "Does even Philip consider my sacrifice needless, and would he rather I had rewarded the devotion of a man, whose equal shall never probably confer upon me so great an honor?"

Sad news and glad news had mingled in the epistles from home, the former consisting principally of the sudden death of old Mr. Carstairs, little more than a month after our departure; and the latter, coming to us two months' later, with a breath of hope that, even yet, Percy, his son, might be delivered from the depths of degradation into which he had fallen, and be restored to his right mind and truer destiny.

"Frank, who, by the way, bids fair to become another temperance lunatic," wrote Mr. Maxwell, "has taken him in hand, sent him off to an asylum for the inebriate, or some such place, and looks forward to his return—a new man. I can't say I

feel so sanguine as the reverend gentleman, for I don't believe all the stuff one hears now-a-days about total abstinence. If a man hasn't will enough to resolve to take a little, and only a little, and stick to it, how in the name of all that is wonderful is he to have resolution enough to take none at all."

Smiling at Mr. Maxwell's well-sounding, though flimsy, logic, we turned our faces homewards, with glad anticipation that not the least joyful experience which should meet us on our return should be the sight of one in whose fate we felt so intense an interest, restored to manliness, self-respect, and sobriety.

In my heart of hearts I marvelled at all this, and wondered what had brought it about ; but it was not till we were once again settled in Philip's home, that I learned the whole story of Percy's restoration, from his own lips.

"Dear Nora, you do not know what a brother Frank has proved himself. I shudder when I think how low I had fallen, when he came to me with the proposal, which I sincerely believe, has proved my salvation."

"Percy," he said, "I am at last become a total abstainer ; it is many a day since I first began to have doubts on the subject involved in this resolution, but always put them from me as unmanly and absurd. After much heart searching and prayer, I have arrived at my present decision ; and my first effort in the cause, which I now hope to have very near at heart, is, my brother, your recovery from the curse of strong drink. His proposal that I should leave home, and, by my own consent, put myself under restraint for a time, you know ; the result you also know ; but the kindness, devotion and sympathy with which he has visited, cheered and encouraged me, during the time of fierce trial through which I have passed,

you do not and can never know. The fact that I am to-day a sane and sober man, my wife and child restored to me, and a home, which in the meantime his generosity has largely procured for me (but which debt I *do* hope to repay in time, for I mean to work, and work hard), is a glory to him, which I intend others shall see as well as myself."

"Nora, what do *you* think of this brother of mine?" he concluded with a smile, in contrast to his former gravity, as he turned away; "what do *you* intend shall be his reward?"

The same evening another, and a dearer friend, came to me and repeated the same question; and from him I could not withhold a reply. Oh! the happiness of that night, when with unwavering trust and hallowed joy I pledged my faith to "this brother of mine," and learned in return that my happiness was due to a brother, as dear to me as Percy's was to him—Philip Newton.

"Ah! how you puzzled me that day, for I saw (how presumptuous I am becoming) that you loved, and yet rejected me; but Philip's penetration enlightened my perception, and set me thinking as I had never thought before, on what I have often laughingly alluded to as Philip's mission."

"If this young girl," I thought, "can deliberately reject what I am vain enough, no not vain enough, but blessed enough, to believe is very precious to her, from a firm conviction of the inconsistency of my preaching and practice, as Philip has often averred to me is the case, as concerns this temperance question, there must be something in it that I have never seen before. Nora, you know the decision I have come to for myself, and you may feel certain that the principles I

hold I will also strive, as in me lies, to advance among my fellow men. We will work together, shall we not?"

"Are you not very proud," he inquired later, "to have been the means of creating a temperance reformer?"

The words were said with a smile, and with an answering one of mingled bashfulness and assurance, as I called him by his name for the first time, I replied, "No, Frank, not proud but very, very happy."

Three years have passed since I uttered the words, and they have often been echoed in my heart since then. My husband has more than fulfilled the resolutions which called them forth, and Philip's life work we have unitedly made our own.

Frank's ministry is successful and beloved, and himself much esteemed for his works' sake, which is not now confined to those who comprise his congregation, or with whom he may come in contact in the ordinary walks of life; but also extends to the poor and outcast, who never seek his ministry, but whom his ministry seeks, with the old love for souls which ever characterized it, united with a thoughtful care for their temporary welfare, and earnest endeavors to reclaim them from the drunkenness and debauchery in which they are enveloped.

And now I shall conclude my tale with a conversation which occurred very recently in a railway carriage, as Frank—our little daughter—and I were setting off for our yearly holidays among the mountains, from which we always returned refreshed and strengthened.

Philip and Meta, accompanied by a little boy and girl, stood on the platform and waved us adieu, as the train moved off.

"Are you acquainted with that Mrs. Newton?" inquired a

lady seated opposite to me, who had been visiting W—— for a week, and the previous Sunday attended our church ; and with whom I had exchanged civilities on that occasion, and also this morning when we entered the carriage together.

“She is my dearest friend,” I returned, and added with a smile, “but why do you call her *that* Mrs. Newton?”

“Oh, I heard them talking about her at Mrs. A——’s last week ; she is a little peculiar, is she not?”

“Certainly, she is peculiarly sweet and loveable,” I replied, smiling again.

“Yes, she does seem that ; in fact she looks quite different from what one would expect. After hearing of her strong-minded ideas and actions on the temperance question, I was surprised to have this fair and fragile girl pointed out to me. I am told she is almost as great an enthusiast and reformer as her husband, and that is saying a good deal. I must not call her anything worse, or Mr. Carstairs will presently favor us with a temperance lecture,” she added smilingly, as she glanced at Frank, who was reading his newspaper in a farther corner, and only smiled quietly in reply, without looking up.

“She seems very youthful to be the mother of two children,” she began again, apparently much interested in the subject of our conversation, and unwilling to let it drop.

“The youngest only is her child,” I replied ; the other is adopted.”

“Indeed ; how strange for a young wife to commence by adopting a child ; but probably the little fellow was some stray waif whose forlorn condition her benevolence could not resist ; the child of drunkard’s very likely.”

“You are partly right ; the boy’s father was latterly a con-

firmed drunkard, and when in a fit of drunken rage, gave his loving and industrious wife her death blow. He is now fulfilling a term of ten years' imprisonment with hard labor for manslaughter. The child's mother was, before her marriage, nurse to Mrs. Newton's younger brothers and sister, and was much respected by all the family and not less by myself."

"How very shocking," exclaimed my companion; "but how did such a girl happen to link her fate with a man like that?"

"Ah! he was a good-looking, kind-hearted fellow, superior in many respects to his equals in position; and at the time Jane married him only got occasionally drunk. Poor Jane was willing to undertake his reformation after marriage, but her sad fate has proved how futile were her endeavors."

"What if the father, when released from prison, should claim his child? Would Mrs. Newton be willing then, after having become attached to the boy, to give him up?"

"I believe she would willingly do so, however painful it might be, were she convinced of the father's reformation, and on condition that he should provide a comfortable home for his child; but these things are in the future, and Meta, I mean Mrs. Newton, has learned the secret of committing each day's affairs to God, contenting herself with the fulfillment of what appears to be present duty and privilege, leaving after results with Him, whose guidance she seeks in all her concerns. Those who know Mrs. Newton best, can best understand the purity of her life and motives."

"She is not nearly so pretty as her sister, Mrs. Carstairs," was the lady's next rather irrelevant remark; "but then I have been told she is more amiable, and much better liked; is it not so?"

I knew well that my husband, though apparently absorbed by his paper, had been a listener to every word of the preceding conversation, but was surprised when he forestalled my reply to this question, by himself addressing our fellow-traveller.

Fearing, I believe, that I, who sometimes spoke hastily, and had not always my "conversation with grace, seasoned with salt," should thoughtlessly utter a comparison between the sisters, too unfavorable to the first-mentioned, he said quietly, "Mrs. Carstairs will never, I suppose, become quite as amiable a character as her younger sister; but, my dear Mrs. B——, she is like the rest of us, undergoing 'the discipline of life,' and is daily improving under its sometimes harsh, but salutary influence; and bids fair in time to emulate, if not equal, the virtues, which, with her sister are more inherent, but with her may, by the grace of God, be gradually acquired."

THE END.

